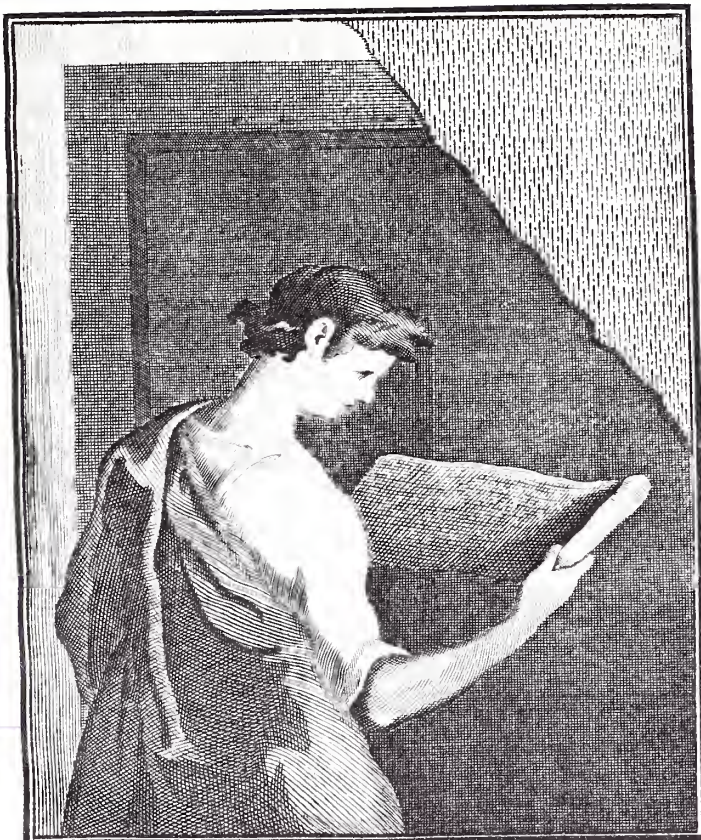


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SIR L. ALMA TADEMA, R.A.
HIS LIFE AND WORK



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SAPPHO

THE ART ANNUAL

SIR L. ALMA TADEMA

ROYAL ACADEMICIAN

HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY

HELEN ZIMMERN

With Numerous Illustrations



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L. ALMA TADEMA, R.A.

ONE of the greatest ornaments of the Royal Academy at the present time is beyond question the painter Alma Tadema. This distinguished artist has resided in England so many years that the public is apt to forget that he is not truly an Englishman, and that his great fame cannot be altogether laid to the credit of his adopted country. Still it is nothing unprecedented for a distinguished foreigner to become so thoroughly naturalised in this country that only the unfamiliarity of his name reminds us that he is not by birth an Englishman. Herschel and Handel are two

famous examples, and in the walks of imitative art we may mention Roubiliac, Kneller, Fuseli, and more recently Herkomer. It is but natural that instances should become more numerous as the impediments to national intercourse disappear, and the world becomes more cosmopolitan. Never, probably, were there so many noteworthy foreigners settled in this country, and whether formally naturalised or not, become, to all intents and purposes, her adopted citizens, as at the present moment. That artists should be largely represented among them might be expected, for the man of letters finds diversity of speech a more or less serious hindrance, while the language of

Art is universal. In the case of Alma Tadema the obstacles to complete adoption into the ranks of English artists are still further mitigated by the character of his work. If his subjects are not English, they are no more un-English than similar themes would be in the hands of an English painter. Since coming among us he has, with rare exceptions, devoted his pencil to the delineation of the life of antiquity, a pursuit in which distinctions of country are obliterated, and the painter's nationality is rather determined by his residence than his birth on this or the other side of the German Ocean.

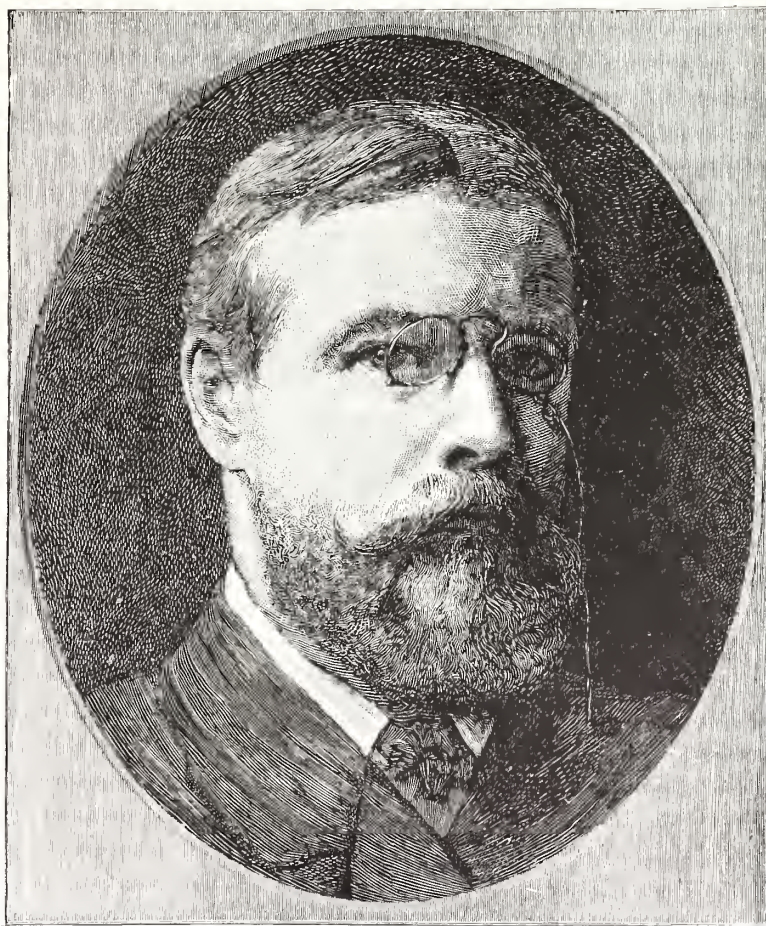
Certainly no Englishman will be anxious to disclaim a man of whom the country of his adoption, as well as the country of his birth, may be justly proud.

Laurens Alma Tadema was born on the 8th of January, 1836, in the little Frisian village of Dronryp, near Leeuwarden, in Holland. Like the Hobbemas, Dotingas, Ozingas, and other well-known Dutch clans, the Tademas have been natives of the place from time immemorial, and their name is a familiar one in the legends relating to the formation of the Zuyder Zee. The evolutionist can trace with interest not a few of

Tadema's qualities as a painter to his Frisian origin, evidences of which appear again and again in his work, often in the most unlikely manner and places. The prefix "Alma" is peculiar to the painter, who received it from his godfather. This is also a Frisian family name, and the painter joined it on to his own for the sake of distinction from other members of his family.

By birth he is of good Dutch burgher origin. His father, Pieter Tadema, was a notary, and seems to have been a man of considerable intelligence, whose æsthetic proclivities showed themselves in a great love for music, a taste inherited by his son. The mother was a woman of rare energy and intellect, adding

one more to the long list of remarkable women who have borne great sons. Left early a widow with a large family of small children, two her own, the rest her husband's by his first marriage, frail of body, poor of purse, the brave woman yet held her own nobly. There was no faltering or failing in her struggle with the battle of life. Difficulties were faced calmly, resolutely, never shunned or weakly ignored. In much of the son's work we seem to see the mother's informing spirit, and if from his father Alma Tadema inherited his musical tastes, his mother gave him a yet more



L. Alma Tadema, R.A., from a Painting by Himself. Engraved by R. S. Lueders.

precious heritage, that of quiet perseverance, of marvellous energy, of infinite capacity for taking pains, as well as of a high and strenuous sense of duty. Our painter was but four years old when his father died. He was the youngest but one of the family, his mother's darling, and he watched her struggles with his youthful eyes, and the lessons to be learnt from them sank deep into his soul.

Early impressions are the strongest, and it is interesting to know what were the outer surroundings of the future painter's boyhood. We all know Holland as a flat, monotonous land, not without a certain charm, perhaps, but somewhat tame and dull. Tadema's early home lay in one of the flattest of the flat portions of that level land. In his boyhood many of the women of Leeuwarden still wore the quaint Frisian dress, with its brilliant colours, stately caps, and the veils that gave such a quaint distinctive character to both

the inhabitants and the landscape in which they moved. It is also worthy of note that the province in which the painter was born and lived as a boy is one of the many in Holland where Merovingian antiquities, such as coins and medals, are found; and it was the Merovingians, we shall find later on, who first attracted him in history. It would seem that, owing to the alluvial nature of the soil, these old Franks were in the habit of making artificial hills for the tombs of their chiefs. On one such hillock tomb, called *terps*, stood the church of Dronryp, for the Frisian constantly built on these mounds to avoid the floods, and hence this little village also possessed such ancient remains.

From his very babyhood Tadema gave unmistakable evidence of the artistic bent of his nature. His favourite toy was a pencil. There is an anecdote preserved in the family that relates how the future painter, before he was five years



Phidias at Work on the Parthenon. (See page 12.) Engraved by J. D. Cooper.

old, had detected and corrected an error of drawing in the work of a master who was teaching a class of older boys. But unmistakable as was the artistic aptitude of the lad, earnestly as he pleaded to be allowed to study Art, the course of his true love was not to run smooth. Many difficulties had to be faced and overcome. The mother and the boy's guardians did not look upon Art as a profession in which to make a career; it was needful in their position that the boy should select a more certainly bread-winning profession, and it was decided for him that he should become a lawyer like his father. To-day we hardly know whether it is more touching or more comic to think of the painter of 'Sappho,' of 'Phidias,' of the 'First-born,' of so many masterpieces, as destined for the dry, dusty, unpoetic profession of the law. The first thing, of course, was to educate him, and to this

end the boy was sent to the public school at Leeuwarden, and passed through the usual school routine. It was all irksome to the lad, who in Greek and Latin never got much beyond the declensions, and who, while this lesson was going on, was usually occupied in drawing the old classic gods. Roman history, however, attracted him, a fact worth noting in relation to his afterwork. Tadema is always more Roman than Greek; his Greeks are generally somewhat Romanised.

But studying could not satisfy the artistic instincts of the youth, and every moment that could be spared from his regular work was spent in drawing and sketching. At one time young Laurens induced his mother to wake him at day-break, by means of a string tied to his great toe, that he might secure the early morning hours to follow his favourite occupation. The story is as characteristic of the mother as

of the son. That the lad had worked to some purpose, albeit alone and without the help of any master, appears from the fact that as early as 1851 Tadema had painted a portrait of his sister, which was exhibited in a Dutch gallery. About this same time he also painted a portrait of himself. It is still in his possession, and reveals in a dim, inarticulate way, many of the qualities that distinguish his later work.

This period of early life was, however, a difficult one for Tadema; for between the desire to abide by his brave little mother's wishes, and his own overwhelming longing to devote himself to Art, he passed through that "hell of time" which makes or mars men. In Tadema's case it made the man. But the struggle between inclination and what to the inexperienced lad seemed duty, was too great for the body. The spirit had borne up undauntedly, but the physical health collapsed completely, so completely that the physicians declared the young man was not long for this world. To have thwarted the wishes of one doomed to an early grave seemed cruel to the guardians' mind, so the idea of the law was abandoned, and Laurens was allowed to take up the brush, much as a patient whose case is hopeless is told he may eat what he likes. The mental strain thus removed, the illness soon disappeared also. Still the doctors were probably right enough: where the bent of genius is so strong as it was in Tadema, to thwart it means death.

This illness was the turning point in the artist's life, and certainly one of the happiest things that could have happened to him. To it he owed what is worth more than life—mental enfranchisement, personal liberty. That this collapse had been due to the mental struggle through which the young man passed, no one who knows the painter now will doubt. The mere idea that this strong man should have been condemned by physicians to an early grave seems almost incredible to those who have ever seen his sturdy, healthy form. For Tadema, as we shall have occasion to point out later, is in all senses of the word healthy. Whether we see in him the supreme genius that he appears to many, or merely the man of extraordinary talent that he appears to others, one thing at least is clear, his work is wholesome and pure, as only the work can be of a man physically as well as mentally healthy. *Mens sana in corpore sano.*

Having wrung the somewhat unwilling leave to study Art from mother and guardians, the first problem that presented itself to the young painter was where should these studies be carried on. In Holland, strange to tell, he could gain admission into no Art school or studio. Perchance the worthies who directed them thought the Frisian country lad wanting in

talent. He therefore decided to go to Antwerp, choosing that city because the son of a family friend was also studying there. This town had the double advantage of being not very far from his home, and at the time one of the artistic centres of Europe. It was then the battle-ground of two schools absolutely opposed one to the other, both in principle and practice. The one was the French school of pseudo-classicism inspired by Louis David; and the other the so-called Belgian-Flemish school, whose aim and object was to revive the best traditions of the native Art as it had been in its most flourishing period. No one who has seen a work by Tadema will be in doubt as to the school to which the young man inclined; and his first step on arriving at Antwerp was to enter the Art Academy and study under Wappers, the leader of what may be termed the national movement. That the youth who had managed to work hard at his art under the most difficult and discouraging circumstances, should put forth redoubled energy under these happier ones, goes without saying. "He did not



The Education of the Children of Clovis. (See pages 4 and 7.) Engraved by R. S. Lucders.

work," says a friend of the painter, "he slaved in his efforts to make up for all the precious time that had been lost." The subjects of these early works (the first of his larger ones was taken from Goethe's *Faust*) were for the most part selected from half-mystic, half-historic times; but of these efforts nothing remains. With rare insight, and rarer courage, the young painter ruthlessly destroyed works which his critical mind told him had not attained the ideal of their creator. To this day Tadema exercises the same critical judgment over his pictures. Anything, even some slight archaeological detail, which probably not half-a-dozen people would notice at all, which seems to him not quite perfect, he will paint over and over again till he himself is satisfied. And is not this after all the characteristic of every true artist, that he works to satisfy himself, to satisfy the need of his own soul? Those who see Tadema's pictures in an Art gallery see the result of incredibly hard and earnest work; but few save his intimate

friends know how that very picture probably hides another beneath it which the painter has painted out. Those who, like myself, have seen this process have grieved sorely as some beautiful figure, some dainty little detail, has been, as it seemed to them, barbarously removed. Yet, in the end, they must confess he is right. For, as Gleyre once remarked about a similar matter, "L'art se compose de sacrifices." Even where something exquisitely charming in itself is taken away, the gain to the work as a whole is generally unquestionable.

But if Tadema worked hard and learnt not a little at the Academy, we have to look elsewhere for the master whose influence was deepest and most lasting. From the Academy Tadema entered the atelier of the famous Belgian historical painter Leys, and in him found exactly what he then needed. To that master he owes much that distinguishes all his work

mother, to whom the son owed so much, was taken from him, before, alas! her boy had made a world-wide fame, but happily not before she had the satisfaction of seeing some great works by him, among them that to which he first owed his reputation, 'The Education of the Children of Clovis' (see illustration, page 3), exhibited at Antwerp in 1861. She also lived to see him the recipient of his first gold medal at Amsterdam in 1862.

The next few years were spent in Antwerp. In 1863 he married a French lady, and two years later he removed to Brussels, where he remained till the death of his wife in 1869, when he came to London, a date that may be said to close an epoch in his life's career. English life and English ways suited the Frisian, who in 1873 received letters of denization from her Majesty the Queen. In 1871 he married an Englishwoman, Laura Theresa Epps, whose beauty we have admired again and again on her husband's canvases, and of whose talent as a painter we have had proof on her own. In explanation of the fact that Tadema has since his earliest years lived and worked everywhere save in his native land, his Dutch biographer points out that between the years 1856 and 1880 Tadema had not earned more than six hundred guildens in his own country, and he adds, "praise is well, but an artist cannot live on air." But although Tadema has lived so long away from Holland, he is in many essential qualities Dutch to the very core. His fame may be said to be world-wide; almost every



The Visit. (See page 13.) Engraved by Carl Dietrich.

—his historical accuracy, his attention to detail. His earlier productions naturally also reflect some of the mannerisms of that master, they have something of his hardness and precision. But the influence of Leys was practically of short duration; Tadema's individuality was too strong for plagiarism, conscious or unconscious.

In 1859 Leys was painting his frescoes for the Antwerp Guildhall, and he allowed Tadema to assist him in the work. For these services, however, he never accepted a penny from the great artist. His mother, seeing that her beloved son was settled for some time at least in Antwerp, yielded to his solicitations that she and his sister should come and live with him, and the two, leaving Leeuwarden, where they had resided since 1838, rejoined the beloved son and brother, who now seemed likely to make a career even in so unprofitable a profession as that of a painter. Four years later, the adored

country has heaped honours upon him; to give a list of these would be to take up more space than we have at our command. Art lovers buy up his pictures eagerly, and orders for more come in with such persistency that even this hard worker cannot supply the demand; the more that success, far from making him careless, has made him only more careful to work up to his ideal. To sign his name to a work that does not seem worthy would be impossible to this conscientious artist. Hence, while some of us may find fault here or there, while such a picture may appeal more to one and less to another, while we are able perhaps to point to certain weaknesses of conception or imagination, slovenly or scamped work we should happily look for in vain in any canvas, large or small, by Alma Tadema. He knows that to be true to Art a man must first be true to himself.

HIS EARLY WORK, 1852—1862.

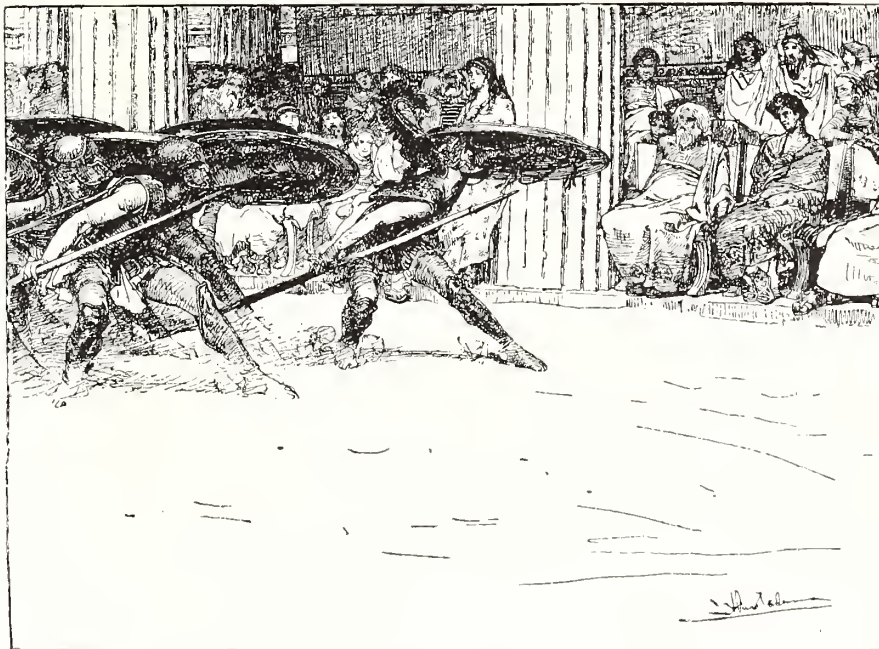
THE Tadema Exhibition, held at the Grosvenor Gallery in the winter of 1882-83, although it did not include all the painter's works, for the prohibitive American tariff hindered the presence of many important pictures from over the water, was nevertheless a thoroughly representative one, and afforded Art lovers a rare opportunity for studying not the works only, but the manner of Alma Tadema. They saw side by side the earliest and latest of his creations; they could compare the efforts of the boy (the first painting exhibited was produced at the age of fifteen) with the mature productions of the man. Such an exhibition, while invaluable for purposes of study, must necessarily be a cruel ordeal even to the greatest painter. That all these numerous works, seen thus together as they were, did not kill each other, that they gave instead unmistakable proof of steady advance in the artist, is so eloquent a fact that it speaks for itself, and needs no further comment.

To see all a man's pictures together, to read all a man's books straight through, where there is not genius, or at least great talent, is likely to be a task wearisome in the extreme, and is almost certain to end in disappointment and disillusion. What may appear touches of genius when seen in one or two instances, if repeated again and again are likely to look very much like clever tricks and nothing more. Tadema would be more than human if in the one hundred and fifty pictures so brought together there had been no traces of mannerism, or if their proximity, while impressing us with the painter's many qualities, had not also forced out more sharply certain limitations and shortcomings of his art. But of trickery there was nothing. This denotes the high standard of solid workmanship ever maintained by this painter.

Probably the first impression upon looking round the galleries in which those pictures were collected was the marvellous finish, the completeness of each work, the rapidity with which the painter had found his ground, and the comparatively short period of tentative effort. Then after a while, almost imperceptibly, there stole upon us a vague impression, a sense as of something wanting: and we asked ourselves what it could be. Everything seemed so perfect, and yet it left a sense of incompleteness. Then gradually it became clear. It seemed as if most of those men

and women were beautiful truly, often very beautiful, but only physically so, and that they were too frequently devoid of spiritual life. It was not that we wished to see Greeks with the morbid self-consciousness of our modern times written on their faces, or Romans with the introspection and self-doubting of this nineteenth century. But these men and women must have had some manner of soul, and very rarely does Tadema show it to us. We find freshness, grace, infinite charm of colour, gaiety, strength, but little tenderness, or pathos, or dramatic intensity. Were we convinced of Tadema's incapacity to reach what may, perhaps, be an even higher level, we should not refer to this lack. In a man who gives us so much, we should be worse than foolish and ungrateful to ask for what was not his to grant. But there are certain pictures of Tadema's that seem to point to the conclusion that he has not yet given all that he might. There are a

few of his canvases (we shall refer to them in detail farther on) so full of tragic power, of dramatic conception, and of pathos, that we feel justified in pointing to where the qualities are wanting. As a rule, it is Tadema's marbles and silks, his stuffs, his textures, his silver and gold and bronze, and occasionally his flowers, in a word, his inanimate objects that live in our memory, and we not infrequently think of



The Pyrrhic Dance.

his men and women as mere accessories to these. But the artist who could give us the life-like blending of tragedy and humour of his 'Roman Emperor,' the infinite pathos of the 'Death of the First-Born,' the exquisite tenderness of 'The Question,' has not spoken his last word. We have the right to expect something from him that he has not yet bestowed. Further, work like this seems lacking of late years, and we regret to notice him wasting his marvellous powers upon repetitions, with trifling variants, of some little subject, producing wonders of colour and beauty that fascinate our eyes and brain, but which, nevertheless, fail to reach our hearts.

The earliest specimen of Tadema's skill at the Grosvenor Gallery, the one that has survived the elimination already referred to, was the portrait of himself dated 1852. As the production of a lad of fifteen, it has wonderful qualities; there is a simple straightforwardness about it that has in it a world of meaning, and its undoubted hardness and dryness

of tone are more than atoned for by the vigour and earnestness of the drawing. The next work of note belonging to this early period is the well-known 'Clotilde at the Tomb of her

the young man had come across Gregory of Tours' "History of the Franks," and the quaint old chronicles had completely fascinated him. This is hardly to be marvelled at, for the

work is a very treasure-house for artistic purposes, as stirring in its way as any of the old Sagas. As an historian Gregory would hardly satisfy modern requirements, but as a story-teller he is inimitable. He snaps his fingers at objective impartiality, takes sides with his heroes, and deals out poetic justice with refreshing disregard for probability. Above all he introduces his heroes dramatically and makes them speak for themselves. The use made by Tadema of this old book is of the utmost interest, for it throws light upon his whole method of work.

Nor did he content himself with such hints as could be gathered from this volume. The archæological truth of his later work is already foreshadowed in this first historical canvas: no possible means of obtaining information was lost; every little coin found near his home was studied, and the result is a wonderfully powerful picture which in its smallest detail was the outcome of earnest study. It affords a perfect insight into his method of work. In Gregory's Chronicles there is no word that tells of "Clotilde at the grave of her grandchildren," but he narrates the following story. Clovis, the great king, had married Clotilde, daughter of the King of Burgundy, and she had borne him three sons. The eldest had fallen in battle with the Burgundians, but his mother had sent for his children, two sons, and had them educated at Paris. Then her second son became jealous of the love and care lavished on his nephews and he sent secretly for his younger brother, and the two together determined to slay the children. To get them into their power they said they wished to raise them to the throne, and Clotilde, pleased thereat, for the grandchildren were the sons of her first-born, sent the lads to their uncles, but these, as behoved wicked uncles, murdered them and their attendants and teachers. Then "the Queen placed the dead bodies of the children on the bier, and amid the singing of choirs and indescribable grief, she herself followed them to the church of St. Peter, and there buried them side by side. The one was ten, the other seven years old." Such was the story, and the painter at once beheld all its true meaning, and the scene Gregory had not described became a reality to him. He saw the grandmother grieving at the grave of the little ones, doubly loved for themselves and for their



"Are Cæsar: Id Saturnalia," Engraved by T. Robert.

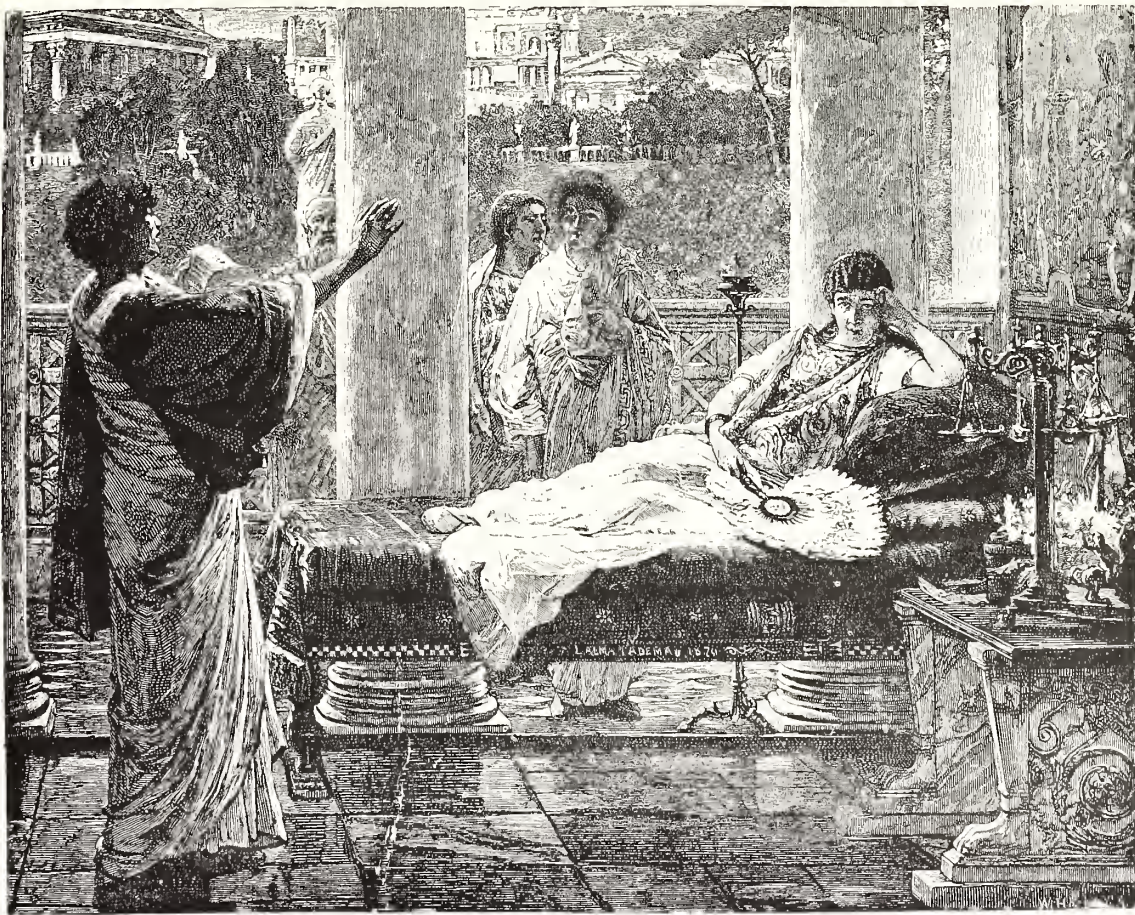
Grandchildren,' one of a whole series of paintings that deals with Merovingian times and modes of life. While studying in the Antwerp Academy under the Professor of History, Detaye,

dead father, and as he saw her in his mind's eye so he has depicted her for us. The execution of this picture shows less perfection perhaps than any other of his early works.

Next followed the picture to which Tadema owed his really great success, 'The Education of the Children of Clovis' (see page 3), and in this remarkable painting we already find most of the characteristics that have made him famous; in less marked degree, of course, than in later pictures, but still all there. We discover in it the Dutch minuteness of detail, the careful adherence to facts, the determination to give historical accuracy as well as accuracy of accessories, the purity of colour and skill in grouping of figures. The influence of Leys is distinctly felt; indeed, it was the first picture the pupil painted under this great master, but this influence was not sufficient to mask the painter's own individuality of conception and treatment. Altogether it is an immense advance upon the 'Clotilde at the Tomb,' especially in the greater energy of conception, in the more varied draperies

and in the movement of the whole. This painting, as already stated, was also inspired by the old Frankish story, and, like most of the pictures dealing with these mythic times, requires some explanation. Indeed, it is a peculiarity and often a drawback to Tadema's work that it is in inspiration and source too frequently remote from the knowledge and, at times, the interest of the general public.

The story runs that Clotilde's uncle had caused her father to be stabbed and her mother to be drowned with a heavy stone hung about her neck. She married the great King Clovis, and after his death sent for her little sons, and telling them not to "make her rue that she had brought them up with love and care," bade them think with bitter hate of the foul wrong that had been done her, and "avenge the death of her father and mother." In his picture, Tadema shows us



At Lesbia's. Engraved by W. Hecht.

the Queen superintending that education which is to fit them to carry out the revenge. She gazes with pride at her boys: the eldest is hurling the axe, the second standing by waiting his turn, while the youngest nestles by his mother's side, watching his elder brothers. She looks on with pride, and yet there is infinite sadness in the set face, that speaks the foreboding at her heart. The design of the eldest child is singularly spirited and original; the other figures are, for the most part, not so bold and firm as accessory figures in later productions, but that of the boys' instructor, bending forward to watch the prowess of his charge, is full of life. This remarkable painting, which assured the position of its painter, is now the property of the King of the Belgians. It, in the first instance, was bought by the Antwerp Society

for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts for the small sum of 1,600 francs, a price which at that time seemed acceptable to the artist.

'Clovis's Children' was followed by yet a further series of works inspired by the Merovingian chronicles. We can here but mention 'Venantius,' 'Fortunatus and Radagonda,' now in the Museum at Dordrecht, and the highly interesting 'Gonthram Bose.' This last picture is full of movement, the colouring superb. It affords also an admirable example of Tadema's method of filling out every inch of canvas. Here the intention is still, perhaps, too obvious; it was not yet within the powers of the young painter to fill his canvas quite naturally, and without any sense of overcrowding.

The next pictures still dealt in large part with the Merovingians. One depicted Fredegonde at the death-bed of Prætextatus (see illustration), Bishop of Rouen. The canvas can again be best explained by Gregory's story. This tells how the Bishop, attacked by assassins hired by Fredegonde

that she should rejoice at his recovery, and that she should seek out the guilty and punish them. "Then the Bishop, who saw through her deep cunning, said, 'Who has done this? The same who has killed our kings, who has so often spilt innocent blood, and has been guilty of so many crimes in this kingdom.' Then spake Fredegonde, 'I have many experienced physicians, let me send them to thee.' 'Me,' he replied, 'God would now call away from this world, but thou, who hast caused all these sins, wilt be cursed to all eternity, and God will avenge my blood upon thy head.' Then she went forth, but the Bishop put his house in order and departed thence."

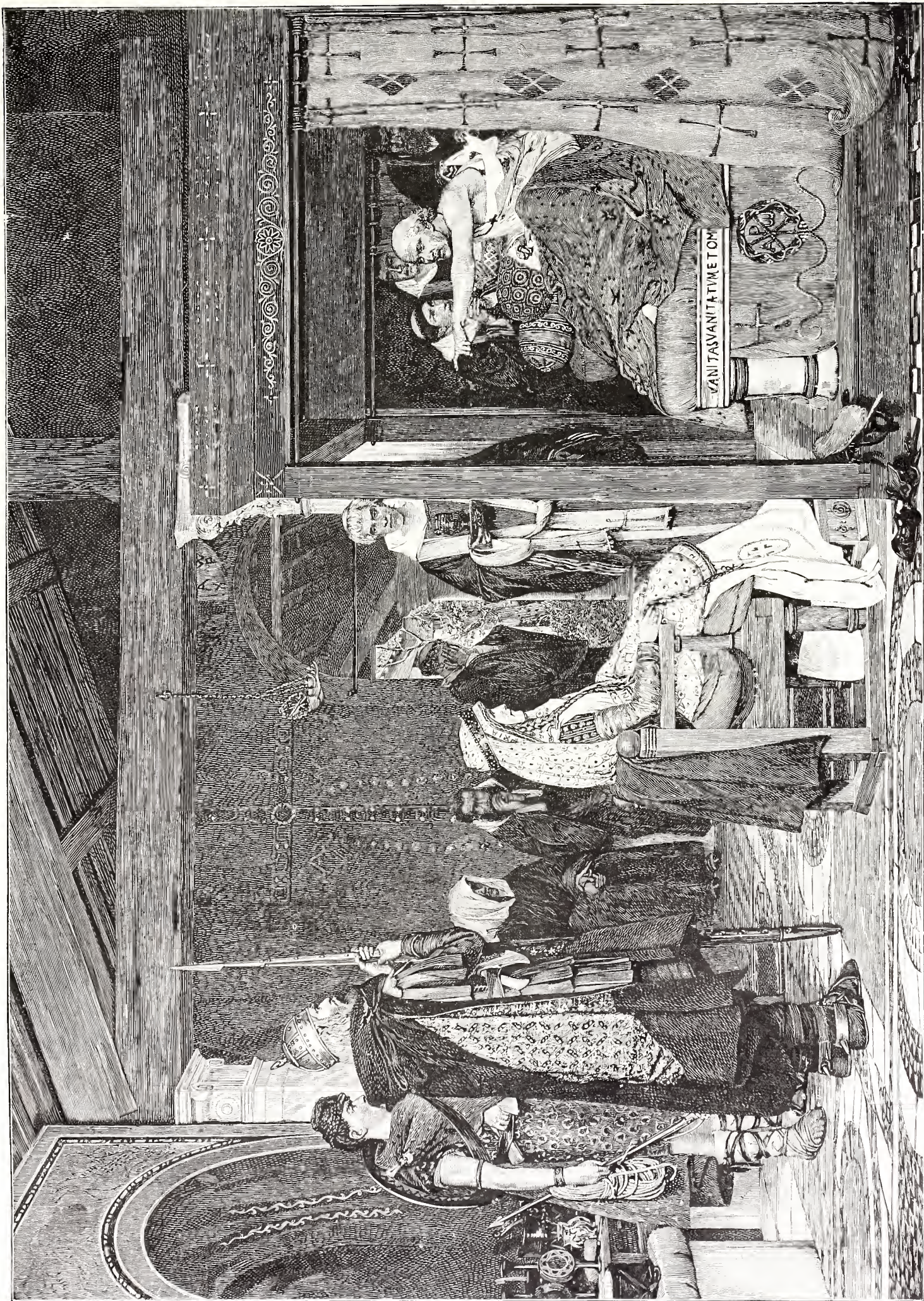
Here we no longer find Tadema taking a picture merely suggested by circumstance, but actually portraying a written scene; and how admirably it is on the whole portrayed, those who have seen this canvas will bear witness. Beneath the outstretched and denouncing arm of Prætextatus we see the death-dealing wound, and we feel its blood will be upon her head, upon the head of that bold bad woman who sits beside the bed. There is nothing mild or forgiving in the wounded priest; energy, fierce passion look out of his face. This, as well as the arm, are cursing deep, loud, and long. And how strangely powerful is the calm of the Queen in its contrast to the passion of the man! The slightly ironical mouth seems to be saying, "Provided you be called away, out of my way, I reckon little who calls you." And if the form is a little hard, the beauty the painter probably wished to portray somewhat hidden beneath the sternness of the face, we can forgive it for the sake of the power of this head and figure. There is character too in the two dukes on the left, and there is fine meaning in the five other figures that compose the



Tarquinius Superbus. Engraved by A. Bellenger.

even as he celebrated mass on Easter-day, was sorely wounded under the arm and was carried by his attendants to his room and laid upon his bed. And soon after Fredegonde, accompanied by the Dukes Beppolen and Ausolwald, came to him, and she pretended to be angered at what had happened, and

group. In this work too we have all the attention to detail which, with Tadema, is proverbial. The bed, the mosaic of the floor, the chair in which the Queen is sitting, the dresses of all the personages represented, all these are reproduced with marvellous care and painstaking.



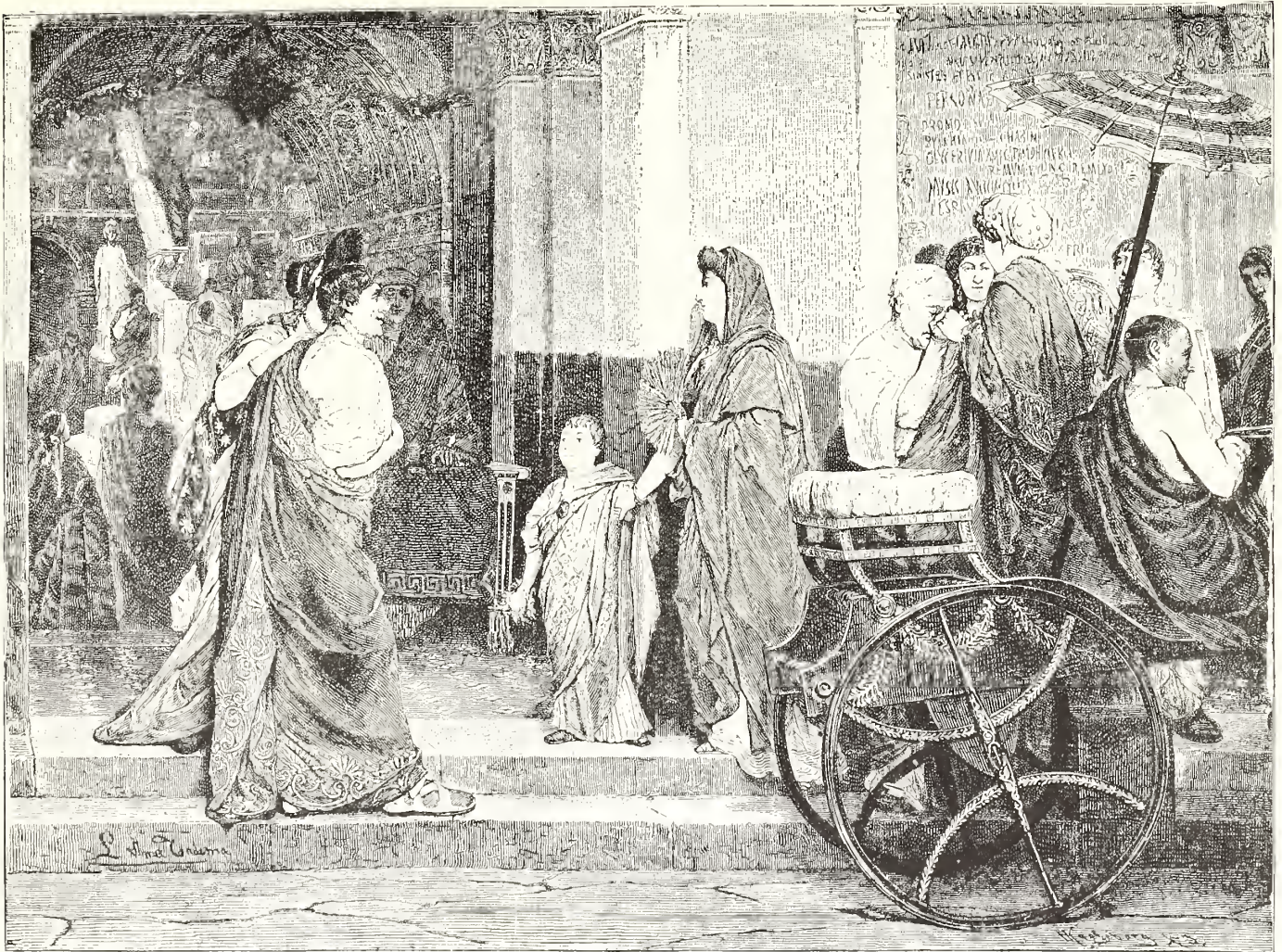
FREDEGONDE AT THE DEATH-BED OF PRÆTEXTATUS. Engraved by Bong and Henemann.

HIS SECOND PERIOD, 1863—1869.

THE time had now come for Alma Tadema to turn from portraying splendid barbarians to painting those nations which not only are the source of all our own culture, but the embodiment to us of Art and beauty. It is characteristic that Tadema should first have turned to the land which has fascinated so many poets and artists, the land of mystery and wonders, the birthplace of science, the land of Isis and Osiris. Asked by the well-known Egyptologist, George Ebers, how he had been led to study Egyptian life and customs, and to portray them in his pictures, Tadema replied: "Where else, when I began to make myself acquainted with the life of the

ancients, should I have begun? The first thing the child learns of ancient times is about the court of Pharaoh, and if we go back to the original source of Art and the science of ancient nations, how often, then, do we not go back to Egypt?"

The result of this going back to the source of Art was the production, in 1863, of 'Egyptians Three Thousand Years ago,' with which picture what may be termed Tadema's second period commences. His method of approaching the subject was absolutely original; here were no longer the conventional landscape, the conventional figures, and mere



Entrance to a Roman Theatre.

archæological correctness. It must have come with something of a shock to many persons, that there could be a side to Egyptian life of which they had not dreamed, that behind these strong forms were living human beings; that the stolid fixed exterior hid men and women who had laughed and wept, rejoiced and grieved, even as ourselves. Indeed the great aim of Tadema's Art is to bring his Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks, within the scope of our sympathies, or at least of our comprehension of them as men and women, not as simply Romans, or Greeks, or Egyptians. That he occasionally fails may be granted, that frequently we have an irritating

sense that there is more soul in the marble and silver of his pictures than in his human beings; that his perfection, as Ruskin has said, is sometimes in inverse ratio to the value of the thing portrayed, that we occasionally miss a certain dramatic intensity and spiritual loftiness of conception, cannot be denied; but at his worst Tadema is never merely an archæologist reproducing classical remains and no more. When he is at his worst, and the painter of three hundred pictures cannot always be perfect, "or what's a heaven for?" as Browning would ask, Tadema's creations are redeemed by many admirable qualities, and when he is at his best—and he

is at his best when dealing with Egypt and with Rome—he is in many respects unique among living painters, and altogether unapproachable. It is worthy of note that on the whole, excepting of course some very charming pictures, Tadema is far less successful with his Greeks than with his Romans. We cannot avoid a conviction that his Greeks are Romans in disguise. Even the Phidias, which we shall consider presently, despite much that is exquisite, despite the fascination of the subject, has not the subtlety of many of the Roman works, and we could hardly imagine a Hellenist saying what an Egyptologist has said of his Egyptian pictures: "These works say much to the connoisseurs that the uninitiated cannot understand. This is a true resurrection of Egyptian life. Here is nothing that does not belong to the time of Pharaoh; just like this wall, were the walls of the Palace of Rameses III. . . . All here is true, and as if the master had anticipated what was only discovered ten years after the picture ('Death of the First-Born') had been painted, he placed at the feet of the dead a wreath of flowers that are strikingly like those found in the royal tombs at Derel-Bachri."

'The Egyptians Three Thousand Years ago' was followed by the 'Chess-players' (so full of the quaint humour of which the artist displays much in private life, and of which he lets but little overflow into his works), 'The Egyptian at his Doorway,' and the 'Mummy.' In the 'Egyptian at his Doorway' we have Tadema's first distinct application of genre painting to antique subjects, and apart from the merits of the work in itself, it is of interest as the forerunner of innumerable other pictures conceived in the same spirit. In this original use of genre may we not again trace something of the painter's nationality? The 'Mummy' too is a wonderful piece of workmanship. It depicts the family of the defunct bringing

offerings to a mummy that stands on end at the right of the spectator. A somewhat similar theme was treated in 1873 under the title of 'The Widow,' where, in a small Egyptian temple, on the bier, lies the mummy by the side of the sarcophagus where he is to be laid to rest. Crouching at his feet kneels his sometime wife, while priests sit round singing the funeral psalms. Between columns we behold the palm-trees that grow without, whose shadow falls almost caressingly over the dead and the mourner.



The Convalescent. Engraved by J. D. Cooper.

Besides these works there belong to the years 1865—1868 many important canvases, among others: 'A Roman Family,' 'The Honeymoon,' 'Lesbia,' 'The Discourse,' 'Claudius,' 'Tarquinius Superbus,' 'A Roman Dance,' 'Visit to the Studio,' 'Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus,' 'Tibullus at Delia's,' 'Entrance to a Roman Theatre,' 'The Preparations for a Feast in a Pompeian House,' and various portraits. 'Lesbia' is worth mentioning if only to show that the insight of the artist is often more trustworthy than that of the *savant*. This Lesbia is mourning over a little dead bird, and a Berlin critic declared it a ridiculous mistake to paint a Roman woman, "who knew no pity for animals," weeping over a dead bird. Of course Tadema had simply to refer this hypercritic to Catullus, and re-

mind him of the maiden who wept her eyes red over the dead sparrow. The 'Visit to the Studio,' lacking though it does some of those qualities of refinement that are characteristic of Tadema, is interesting as a study in light and shade, and for effects of chiaroscuro that are as pleasing as they are novel. The harmonizing of the lady's dark cinnamon and the gentleman's white dress with the surroundings is admirable, just as in 'Agrippina' the red toga and the golden chiton are made to produce a wonderful result.

The 'Entrance to a Roman Theatre' (see p. 9) shows us Romans going to see a play by Terence. The picture is full of life, and has a touch of humour. The grouping too is admirable, the effect of space being wonderfully conveyed despite the number of figures crowded together. The figure of the woman is perhaps a little wooden. She is one of those women that this painter often introduces, and in whom, do what we will, we cannot feel the slightest interest. 'The Roman Family,' 'The Roman Dance,' and 'The Discourse' are remarkable for the infinite care bestowed upon them, while in the Pompeian scene we feel the painter had a subject after his own heart. But the greatest picture of those produced during these three years is unquestionably the 'Tarquinius Superbus' (see p. 8) a truly magnificent piece of work. We see Tarquin cutting off with his sceptre the heads of the tallest poppies that fill the garden court. The sun is streaming in upon the gay flowers, while the wall is kept in sombre gloom. This entire canvas is instinct with tragic power. There is a strength in the figure of Tarquin such as Tadema has given us all too rarely, and that fascinates; you would fain turn away (for there is something almost oppressive in these sun-bathed flowers, contrasting with the stern evil face of the king, that is not without beauty), but you cannot, and as you gaze at each flower, each leaf stands out, and the figures seem living, breathing. Such a work as this clearly proves that Tadema has tragic power, and can paint the soul when he chooses. This same tragic power is put forth, though in an entirely different way, in the pictures that deal with 'Claudius proclaimed Emperor after the Murder of Caligula.' This is evidently a subject which has strongly taken hold of the imagination of the painter, for he returned to it three times. First he treated it as 'Claudius,' then as 'The Roman Emperor' and finally as 'Ave Cæsar! Iò Saturnalia!' Admirable as is the second of these works, the finest version of the story is to our thinking the last, 'Ave Cæsar!' It is the finest because more truly dramatic than either of the others, and because in it the tragedy is more completely maintained. Thus while the two soldiers of 'The Roman Emperor' are very finely conceived, the crowd is less happily rendered. There is no emotion in these faces.

But with the 'Ave Cæsar!' (see p. 6) this is not so. Here there is meaning not alone in every face, but in every line of every face. The obeisance of the soldier who draws away the curtain, is in its way as characteristic as the attitude of Claudius, as livid, his face distorted by fear, his hand grasping the drapery in an agony of terror, he stands revealed to the populace, half

reeling in his abject fear. The murdered men and women lying in a heap to our left, and the group of greeting soldiers and women to the right of the picture, as they ironically salute Cæsar, are equally admirable. And not less admirable is the subtle, delicate, indescribable touch of humour. The introduction of this humorous element, insisted on just enough and not too much, adds to the tragedy of the whole, as the drunken porter adds to the terror of the murder scene in Macbeth. There are critics who have held the introduction of this porter so opposed to all preconceived ideas of tragedy, that they roundly declare the scene is not Shakespeare's. In



Portion of the 'Vintage Festival.'

like fashion some critics have been shocked at the comedy that goes hand in hand with the tragedy of this picture. But this blending of humour and horror heightens the effect of the whole work. There is a reality in it which Tadema has rarely equalled. The accessories have all the perfection we are accustomed to in works by this artist, but here the interest in the human beings is so strong we hardly notice them. Here we do not look at the marbles and mosaics, the hangings and decorations first, and from them to the human beings, frequently to return to these again. Here we, indeed, feel

satisfied that every detail is beautiful and correct, but it is a detail, and serves only the single purpose of enhancing the tremendous effect of the central figure. The painter who could produce two works so essentially dramatic as Tarquin and Claudius, the dramatic effect being produced in each case by entirely different causes, might surely, had he so willed it, have been one of the greatest painters of that very quality which we too often miss in him, the quality of tragic expression.

The next pictures of importance painted by Tadema were, 'Phidias and the Elgin Marbles' (1868), 'The Siesta' (1868), 'A Roman Amateur' (1868), 'The Convalescent' (1869) (see p. 10), 'Confidences' (1869), 'The Pyrrhic Dance' (1869), 'The Juggler' (1869), 'The Chamberlain of Sesostri' (1869).

In Phidias we see the sculptor after he has completed the Parthenon frieze, the greatest artistic achievement of all time. He has just concluded the work and is showing it to Pericles, Alcibiades, and Aspasia. For a moment, perhaps, it is a little difficult to realise that this is a sort of Greek "Show Sunday," but let us once admit the possibility that Phidias did invite such Art-lovers to see his work (it is not improbable in itself), and we can admit that it must have been much as Tadema has imaged it. The frieze to the left of the canvas shows us a line

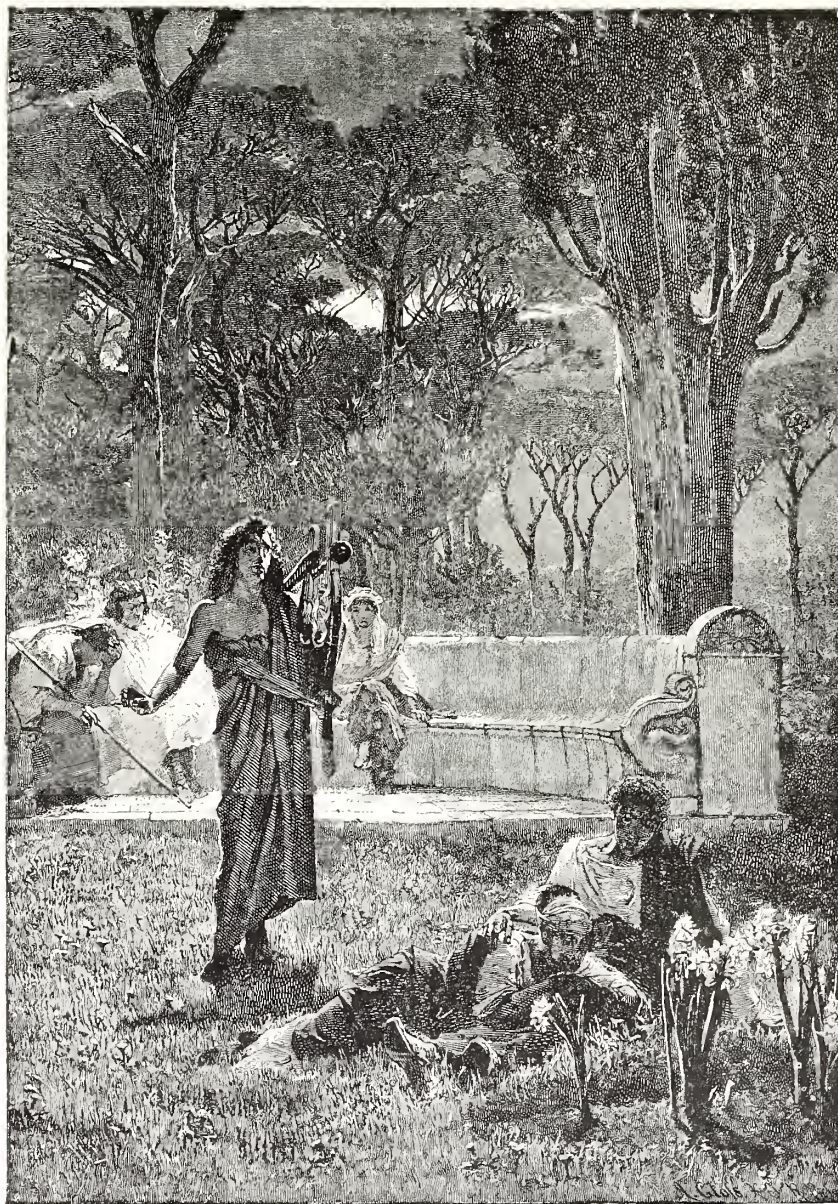
of horsemen on the cella of the temple, coloured in full tints, and this colouring, it must be confessed, is somewhat heavy. The management of light is singular, for it is reflected from beneath the figures, and broken here and there by the great columns and the tympanum. The visitors are separated from the sculptor by a rope. The big bearded man, a scroll in his right hand, is Phidias himself. Perhaps he is not quite our ideal of the divine sculptor, but that the figure is full of strength and character is undeniable. There is pride in the bearing of the artist. The great ones of Athens have come to

see his work, but is he not greater than they? This is what his attitude seems to say. And there is rightly more awe in the faces of the onlookers than in his. The noble form immediately opposite Phidias must be Pericles; and the woman clad in the graceful saffron-coloured garments must be the beautiful Aspasia; while the white-robed youth to the left can be only Alcibiades. Phidias, Pericles, Alcibiades, Aspasia! How much the names mean to us! That their embodiments here should fall a little short of our expectation, that these men and this woman who represent a whole age to us should

here appear rather less interesting than we expect them to do, is but natural. Not even the greatest painters can always succeed in realising for us our ideals. But the subject of this painting is singularly fascinating, and our slight sense of disappointment soon gives place to admiration of the painter's marvellous technique.

The 'Siesta' is a charming picture, full of quietness, repose, and truly classical serenity. An aged man and a youth are resting together in calm enjoyment while they listen to the strains of a flute.

In 'At Lesbia's' (see p. 7) Tadema has returned to his old love, and he now shows us Lesbia as Catullus reads her his verses. Poets reading their verses to their beloved is a favourite theme with Tadema. He has dealt with it at least three times, in three distinct man-



The Improvisatore. Engraved by A. Gloss.

ners, and it is curious to observe that it is the poet who is always the central figure, though we know not whether it was the artist's intention or not that this should be. This 'Lesbia,' amid all the beauty of her surroundings—and how beautiful they are! how full of light and air, as she listens, quietly resting with a far-away abstracted look in her large eyes!—she is in the centre of the picture, the full light illuminates her, seems to be about her as if it was in love with the graceful limbs, and yet it is the reading poet we shall remember when we turn away from the picture. There

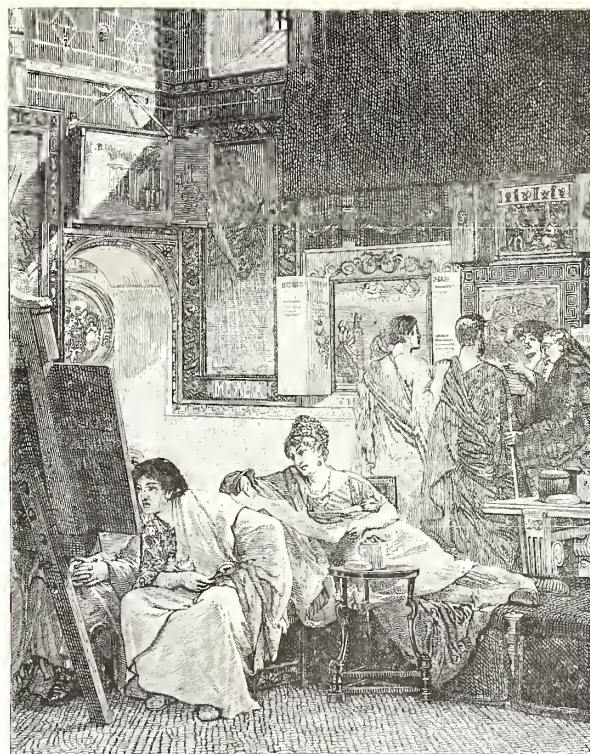
is a yearning earnestness in this somewhat gaunt figure, a sort of passionate meaning in the outstretched arm, a tension about the face that is full of strength, and not without a certain pathos. We also bear away a very vivid memory of the two attendants, the one looks at Lesbia, the other gazes up with something like pity in the eyes. Has the thought of Catullus reading to this Lesbia brought it there?

The 'Convalescent' (1869) (see page 10) takes us again into a Roman interior, an *atrium*. The figure of the convalescent herself is not particularly attractive; the pose is ungraceful; but the old Roman woman who is reading to her and the slave are cleverly individualized. The roses round the marble bust, the column on which hangs a portrait of her lover, and the curtains are singularly beautiful.

'The Chamberlain of Sesostris' (1869) is a fine work; and 'The Juggler' (1869), one of exceeding cleverness. It is, however, somewhat hard. As an example of its cleverness we note the manner in which it is shown that the juggler does his tricks with his hands only, the arms are almost motionless. The onlookers are of greater interest than the juggler himself.

'The Pyrrhic Dance' (1869), of which a sketch is given at page 5, is one of the many dances, and certainly the most original, that Tadema has painted. It created a profound sensation when exhibited in the Academy. The dancers here are Dorian warriors, their dance a war-dance; they are heavily armed, and are led in their movements by one who is a little in advance of the rest. The strong men, despite the great bronze helmets, shields, javelins and corselets, move easily, as if they hardly felt the weight of their accoutrements. The way in which Alma Tadema has suc-

slightly raised amphitheatre, and as they pass them in the arena, the dancers bow to them. Behind the mighty marble columns is a dense mass of people looking on at the performance with various degrees of interest. This picture might be



The Picture Gallery. (See page 18.)



The Sculpture Gallery. (See page 17.)

ceeded in making us see that they *are* heavy, and are light only because of the wearer's strength, is admirable. The violent motion has raised a cloud of dust that half obscures their legs. The great notables who look on are seated in the

said to note high-water mark in Tadema's Art. In certain respects it has never been surpassed, in others never approached. It was no easy task to present pictorially this "mimic-warrior armour game," as Plato calls it. It was the philosopher who taught Tadema the principle of this "game;" representations upon vases that helped him to depict it with archæological accuracy; his own sure instincts that made him delineate it with such force and measure, with that absence of the slightest touch of exaggeration which in this dance was specially fatal, as it threw it into the ludicrous, a result that did occur sometimes, as we have historical evidence. It is known too that both Caligula and Nero bestowed the right of citizenship upon those Ephebæ who danced the Pyrrhic with grace and skill, so highly was this performance valued.

'A Roman Amateur' takes us once more to Rome, and again to the *atrium* of a Roman house. The amateur, Roman though he be, seems a fat, vulgar fellow. He is showing some visitors a silver statue. The dark-haired friend looks with a certain critical glance at the statue; the woman (what a world of suggestion Tadema puts into her costume!) gazes on stupidly, she is thinking the statue is made of *silver*—we know that as well as if we heard her say so. The third visitor is the most interesting. There is a look of undisguised savagery about him that is rendered with perfect success, because it is not over-accentuated. Yet, or rather because, of this self-restraint in the painter who has not laid it on with a trowel, we know the man is a villain, absolutely brutal.

To this year (1869) belongs also 'The Visit' (see page 4), a picture which is perhaps little known to Englishmen.

TADEMA IN ENGLAND. 1869—1875.

IT was in 1869 that Tadema came to live in London, and commenced what may be named his English career. The first pictures painted after that date are 'The Vintage' (1870), 'The First Whisper' (1870), 'At Lesbia's' (1870), and 'In the Temple' (1871).

'The Vintage,' portions of which are reproduced at page 11 and at page 19, is one of Tadema's most important works. But while it bears witness to his unique skill and his power, it goes far to justify those who contend that he has small sense of physical beauty in men and women. A procession is entering a temple. The priestess, the leading figure, would certainly not satisfy all tastes in respect of beauty. Most persons would consider her too heavy in build and form for

loveliness. She lacks light feminine grace, but she has instead qualities which the painters of mere beauty often miss. She has character; and the impression of want of beauty is lost in the far stronger conviction that she is flesh and blood. The same, in some degree, holds good of the other figures. Some are almost disfigured by the straps that half hide the faces: the men bearing the huge wine kegs are not individually interesting, but like the priestess they give us an impression of reality. The picture is a striking example of Tadema's power of conveying his idea and intention to the spectator; he here succeeds in making us forget the individuals, who, truth to say, are not particularly attractive, the better to impress upon us their object. We think of the procession and forget the



Antistius Labeon. (See page 16.)

actors in it even as we look at them. So real, so profound is this sense of their having an object that we half listen for the sounds of music, half expect to see the people move along, to hear the shouts of "Evoe." Tadema has rarely been so happy as in this picture in giving a sense of motion. He has frequently been called the painter of repose, and with some notable exceptions the description is sufficiently just. But certainly looking at this work alone, no one could understand why such a term should have been applied. As for the colouring of this picture, it is remarkable even for Tadema. It is positively saturated with light; we seem to feel the soft balmy air; the marble shines, and the bronzes, the musical

instruments, the wine kegs, the garlands, the thousand and one accessories gleam and sparkle in this bright, clear daylight. How perfect these accessories are, we only begin to understand when we make up our mind to examine them as things in themselves, which is not easy, they belong so to the picture as a whole. Alma Tadema's archæological knowledge is admittedly unrivalled, and we may be quite certain that every detail is scientifically accurate. This artist, indeed, not unfrequently bestows care upon his accessories to the detriment of his human beings; but at any rate we never feel with him, as with many another painter, that he has a stock of properties in a cupboard which he deliberately paints

in. Whether too much emphasized, as in some cases, or whether used merely as the means to an end, his accessories belong to his theme, are part of it and never meretricious. In this work they are distinctly useful in helping us to realise the true meaning of the whole. Occasionally when painting the light-hearted gaiety of the Pagan world, still in its unsaddened childhood, Tadema is not quite successful. There is now and then a sort of "how very gay we are" expression about the people that suggests anything but the gaiety which must be utterly unconscious. But this reproach would be quite out of place applied to 'The Vintage,' we may be sure the men and women of this procession "fleet the time carelessly."

The year 1873 is memorable as the year in which Tadema produced what to many of his admirers is his finest work (a preference which the painter himself shares), namely, 'The Death of the First-born.' Besides this work, to this year belong 'The Widow,' 'The Nurse,' 'The Improvisatore,' 'The First Reproach,' and 'The Last Roses.' There is much power in the form of 'The Widow,' dead to all but her grief, and 'The First Reproach' is not without charm. 'The Improvisatore' (see p. 12) tells its own story, but so beautiful is the landscape that we are inclined almost to neglect the poet and his audience; yet the figures are not without character. The different moods in which they listen is conveyed with great skill. But we must linger for a moment over 'The Last Roses,' and we look at the flowers rather than at the woman who is placing them upon the marble altar. These flowers are not flowers in all the flush and pride of spring-time; they are autumn flowers, they will die—are dying as we look—and these last roses bring us to the consideration of a side of Tadema's genius not yet touched upon, namely, his infinite skill as a painter of flowers. It is true that his flowers, like his men and women, sometimes lack soul, and that they are not always flowers that would grow in a poet's garden. Still Tadema is oftener than not as much in the secrets of flowers as Heine. More than once he must have played eaves-dropper; while the violets

and while,
 "kichern und kosen,"
 "Heimlich erzählen die Rosen,
 Sich duftende Märchen in's Ohr."

To understand Tadema's supremacy as a flower painter we must look at those many pictures in which they are introduced. His use of flowers is exquisite, nearly as exquisite as Shakespeare's use of music. We can hardly say why the flowers are where they are, or why they should be those particular flowers,

but we know they belong there, and that just such flowers there must have been at that place and time. As a charming example of this unique use of flowers we may note their introduction even in so early a work as the 'Education of the Children of Clovis.' The poor flowers, carried by an attendant in the background, are all unnoticed of the Queen, bent on her revenge. Again note the garlands introduced into so many works, now hanging from the busts of kings and emperors, now borne by merry dancing maidens. Is not the 'Oleander' almost more human than the girl sitting



An Audience at Agrippa's. (See page 18.)

beside it? And the tree in 'Pomona's Festival;' one must dance round such a tree as that; and the flowers round 'The Improvisatore,' are they not a poet's dream? These flowers too always express something. Compare, for example, the tragic import of those marvellous poppies in 'Tarquin,' with the quiet charm and homely sweetness of the onion flowers in the 'Kitchen Garden;' or see the brilliant bed of flowers in 'Young Affections,' as young as the young child they surround, the sunflowers in all their glory, the roses in the 'Love

Missile,' or the mere rose-leaves in 'Summer.' They almost "make us faint with too much sweet." While speaking of his flowers, we must not forget Tadema's corn, and above all, his grass. The grass in the 'Pastoral,' all aglow beneath the hot sky, is as eloquent as any flower.

We have left the most remarkable work of 1873, 'The Death of the First-born,' to the last, and to turn from Tadema's flowers to this work is sufficient proof, if proof were needed, not merely of his great talent, but of his extraordinary versatility. In certain qualities 'The Death of the First-born' stands pre-eminent and alone among Tadema's works. We have seen him depict tragic intensity in 'Tarquin,' and if we may so call it, a grotesque tragedy in 'The Roman Emperor.' In this picture of the last worst plague of Egypt, he gives us pathos, despair, that silent grief which "whispers the o'er-

fraught heart and bids it break.' We enter a great Egyptian temple, where we seem almost to feel the darkness and gloom, made the stronger by the gleam of moonlight seen through the distant doorway, and by the lamp that makes the shade more deep and drear. In front is a pillar with hieroglyphics inscribed upon it; its capital lost in the darkness gives a strange sense of awe; but death is mightier than these mighty columns, than the great temple, than Pharaoh himself, for it is his first-born who lies dead. Priests and musicians are gathered round lamps on the floor. The priests are praying, the musicians playing upon strange-looking instruments. The first effects of this solemn scene is awe-inspiring. The colouring is sombre, with a use of greens and browns that is simply inimitable. Thus prepared by the whole surroundings, our attention becomes fixed upon the group of four persons clustered near the king. One of the extraordinary effects of this picture is that while this group of persons is the centre, both actually and spiritually, of the scene, we first observe all their surroundings. Then, as if our mind were subdued to the tragedy of the story, we look upon these four, and to have looked is to remember them always. Pharaoh sits upon a low stool, across his knees lies the slender form of his first-born, dead. The youth is almost naked; the face is wondrously sweet, and there is an inexpressible fascination about the strange golden chain that hangs about his neck, and which probably was put there, bearing some amulet that



A Balneatrix. (See page 19.)

should shield the king's son from harm. The king, on whom the light falls, wears his crown, whose brilliant jewels seem to mock his helpless grief. He sits rigid, calm, immovable. The strong, proud man will make no sign; but, see, there is one feature he cannot control, for not even his strong will can prevent the trembling of his mouth. It is slight—so slight we hardly see it at first—but what a world of woe it expresses! This figure might be taken as the embodiment of grief, grief fixed and immutable, and, like all true emotion truly expressed, with not a hint of morbidity. The mother sits near, bowed down by her sorrow. She too has striven to be strong, and even in this outburst of despair shows self-restraint. On the other side of Pharaoh sits the physician who has been powerless to combat death. In the distance, outside the doorway, move two figures; they are Moses and Aaron, coming to behold their work. This is truly a marvellous picture, and we cannot wonder that its creator likes to retain it in his own hands. It is no picture; it is a thing alive. In every light, in every view, it reveals new features, new aspects of sorrow. And yet it is not too painful a picture to live with, for all its profundity of grief; Alma Tadema is always healthy; there is no trace of morbidity in his nature, and sorrow as rendered by him is what it should be, a grief, but nothing false and strained. The painter of the glad, joyous, sensuous world of the ancients, the world as yet unsaddened by introspection and hyper-analysis of feeling, does not comprehend these sickly modern hyper-sentiments.

Just as in his 'Tarquin' and 'Emperor,' Tadema proved that he could express tragedy, so here he has shown conclusively that he can paint pathos, and that he is possessed of the deeper imagination which he puts forth all too rarely. Had Tadema created but this one superb work, he would be among the greatest artists of our time.

Of the pictures belonging to 1873 we must first linger for a few moments over the beautiful little work called 'Fishing.' A classical garden, a pond, reeds and flowers, a wall, a woman fishing. These are, so to speak, the ingredients of the picture; not very striking materials, yet so used that the result is indescribably charming. The wall behind the fishing woman is golden, of that rare gold colour which Tadema paints so well, and it serves to throw into wonderful relief the cool, clear water. On the hottest day of a hot close London summer one would feel refreshed by looking at this little canvas. It must be an ideal picture to live with. Next we must look at 'The Wine.' Here are a group of people apparently resting after a meal. On the table lies a cheese and a loaf, and—note it carefully, it seems to mean a great deal—a bronze Bacchus. One of the group, an old man, is apparently reflecting on the excellence of his wine; another is having his cup refilled by a slave. The slave's back only is shown to us, but what character it reveals!

The next year was extraordinarily prolific. To mention but a few of the works produced or exhibited: there was 'Sunny Days,' 'A Peep through the Trees,' 'Joseph Overseer of Pharaoh's Granaries,' 'Munster,' 'Through an Archway,' 'Water Pets,' 'Antistius Labeon,' 'The Picture Gallery,' and 'The Sculpture Gallery.' Of these the most important are, of course, the celebrated Picture and Sculpture Galleries; but we must at least refer in passing to so fine a bit of landscape as 'Munster'; to the charming 'Water Pets,' charming, though that has not quite the charm of the inimitable 'Fishing'; to 'Joseph,' a small but characteristic painting, and 'Antistius Labeon' (see page 14). In this latter Tadema has used a little-

London, J. S. Virtue & Co. Limited.



Painted by Sir L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.

Engraved by C. D. Murray

Quelque

known incident, and introduced us once again to one of those bits of Roman home life that makes his ancients so real to us moderns. For this Antistius Labeon, sometimes erroneously called Aterius Labeo, was a Roman amateur artist, who lived in the days of Vespasian, and was pro-consul of the Narbonne district. He painted small pictures for his pleasure, and in Tadema's canvas he is represented as showing his work to his friends. It is characteristic of the times in which he lived that such dabbling in Art was considered by no means the proper thing for a man in his social and civil position.

The technique in the "Galleries" (see illustrations, p. 13) is indescribable, and the mechanical merits of the works are unapproachable. In certain respects the first version of 'The Sculpture Gallery,' that of 1867, reminds us of the 'Roman Amateur,' but here everything that was but indicated there is fully worked out. We are once more being shown a work of Art, not this time by a rich amateur, but in a shop of the period, the back of which was reserved for large pieces and the front for small. We are in Rome, and a company of persons have come to look and admire. Their attention is more especially concentrated on the great

vase which a slave is showing (we know he is this by the crescent worn round his neck). It stands upon a pedestal, and the attendant is turning it round so that the company may see it in all lights. The male visitor has seated himself near his wife, and is apparently holding forth to her upon the merits or demerits of the vase. Pressing up close,

with the fearless curiosity of childhood, are two little ones, and we may be sure that but for the restraining hand of the handsome woman behind them, they would try to touch the work that is being shown them. In the first version of 'The Sculpture Gallery,' a statue of Sophocles (the famous Lateran one) forms the central point, and is being discussed

by a group composed of a Roman lady and two Roman men. The bronze, the marble, the sculptures of the gallery, the draperies, the bronzes and the silvers are miracles of painting. We look on almost breathless at the manifestation of such supreme skill. Not least remarkable in this, and in its fellow-picture, is the management of light. In Phidias we saw the bold and original lighting from below, here the light comes from above, and Tadema has scorned all those little tricks by which less able colourists seem to gain their effects. It has been pointed out, with a certain amount of justice, that some of the Roman types here given are essentially English, and that we really look on Englishmen dressed in Roman attire; and it is true, for the persons depicted are almost without exception portraits. It is to this picture that Ruskin referred in his sweeping asser-



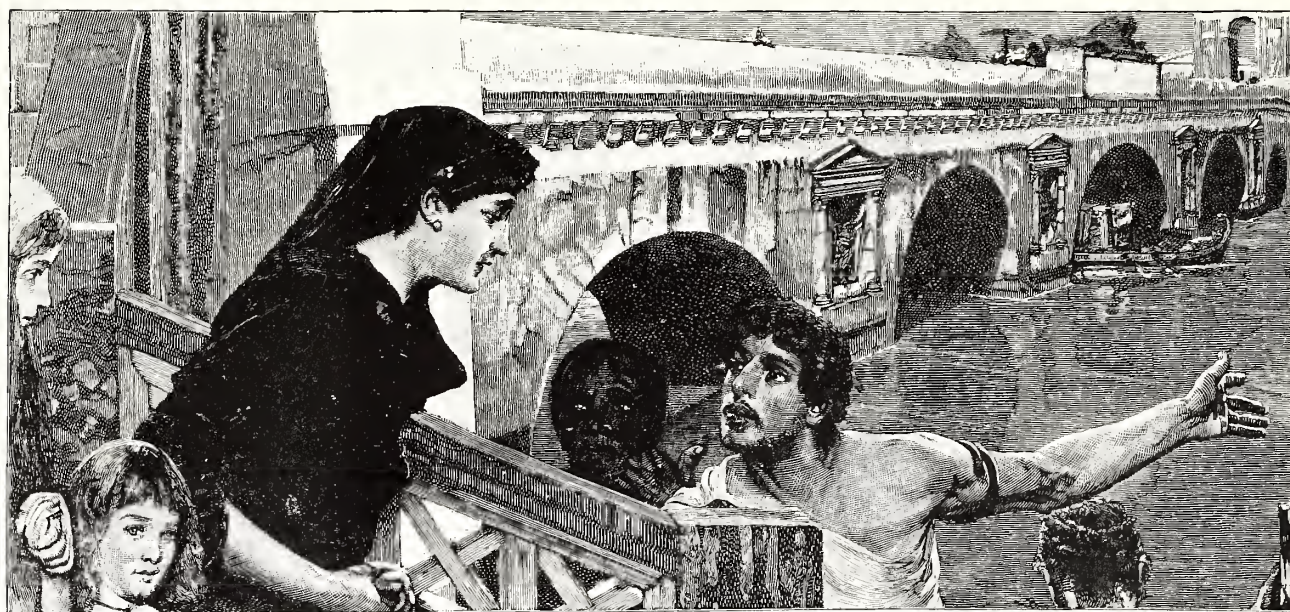
Hide-and-Seek. (See page 19.) Engraved by Bong and Hönemann.

tion that Tadema's stone was good, his silver less good, his gold bad, and his flesh worst. It must be confessed that the figures here presented fail to interest us much, and that the impression we take away from this work is rather one of the unspeakably beautiful accessories than of the principal personages. Indeed, we unconsciously look upon *them*

as accessories to the rest. But after all, while we do feel in this some sense of loss, is not Tadema perhaps more logical? Truly human emotion affects us more than any beautiful object, but here, where no deep emotion could be portrayed, may we not assume that the works of Art, the productions of a genius, are far more interesting than a rich family who go to look at them? The persons who throng to an exhibition of paintings do not, as a rule, interest us so much as the Art displayed. Perhaps Tadema felt this, though probably unconsciously. It may be we are seeing in his work something quite foreign to his intentions, and that would not necessarily strike many persons. But to us the thought seems something like this: beautiful marbles, and bronzes, and silks, and silvers are more interesting than a group of persons who are not moved by any deep feeling. It might be urged that not endowing these men and women with such feeling is Tadema's fault, but while we have admitted that the reproach of unspirituality frequently made against this painter is sometimes deserved, it is not so here. A picturesque group of Roman

Philistines are looking at an artist's creations, and we prefer these creations to the Philistines.

In the companion picture, 'The Picture Gallery' (see illustration, page 13), there is, if possible, even more exquisite work. To us the sunshine in this picture—with what wondrous effect Tadema knows how to give us sunshine and bits of sky that speak of sweet odours and balmy winds!—is finer even than the management of the light in 'The Sculpture Gallery.' Here too we feel a greater interest in the men and women, at any rate in the earnest young fellow who looks so eagerly at the canvas. He is no Philistine come to hold forth to his wife; no *dilettante* come to make a purchase. He is listening with all his soul in his eyes to the description of the painting that stands on an easel turned with its back to us. He is absorbed in the work and does not heed the handsome yellow-haired woman, lazily reclining on a couch behind him, scroll in hand, over which she looks towards the picture that so entrances her companion. There is pride and hauteur in the delicate fair face, but the lines at the mouth express a certain sense of *ennui*. The con-



Down to the River. (See page 21.) Engraved by R. S. Lueders.

trast between these two exists not merely in face but in form; the attitude of the man is a magnificent piece of drawing, and there is an inexpressible grace, not without voluptuousness, in the reclining woman. It was said at the time when this picture was exhibited at the Academy that one of the figures introduced, the black-robed figure behind the couch, was that of a well-known London Art connoisseur. In the background another group, presented with that quiet humour which Tadema sometimes has, is examining paintings on the wall. These paintings are in themselves admirably rendered, and the group is full of life. Altogether these two works, which belong to M. Gambart, fully deserve the immense reputation they enjoy.

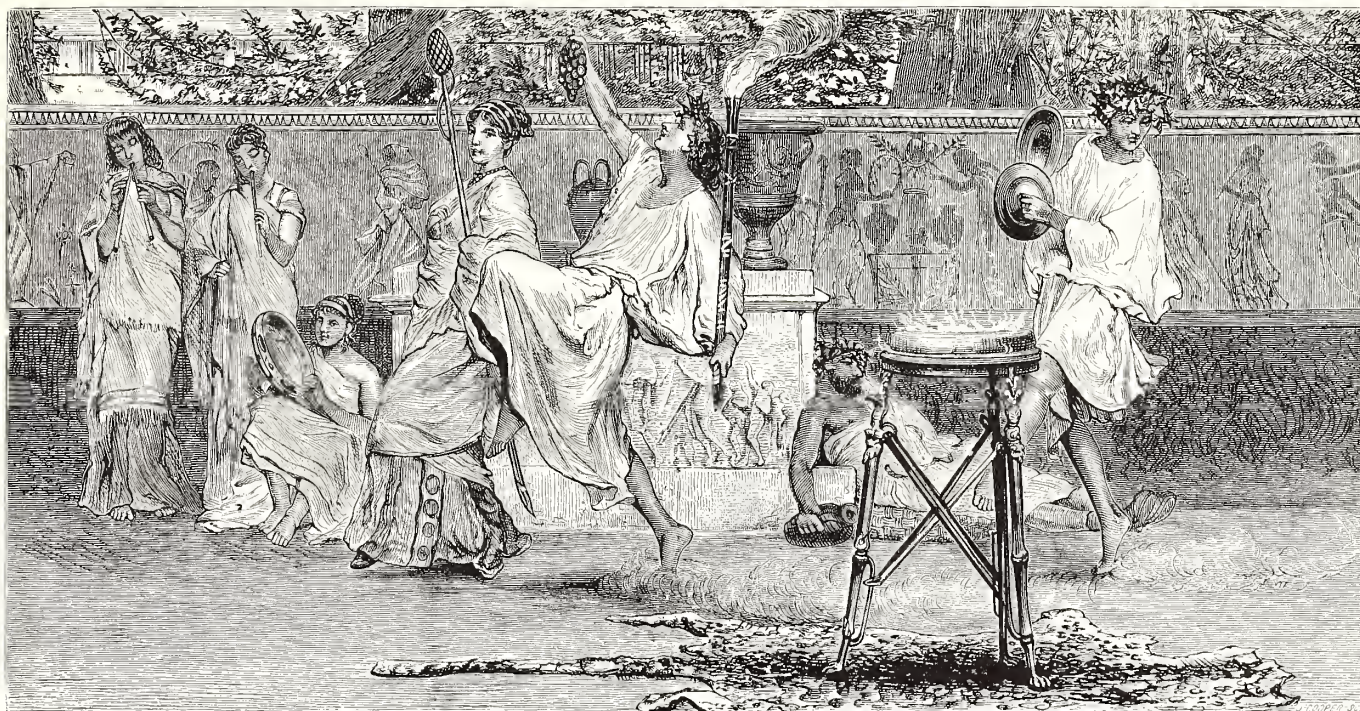
Between 1875 and 1877, Alma-Tadema produced many pictures. Here we shall refer only to the most important. 'An Audience at Agrippa's' (see illustration, page 15) is one of those works in which closeness and fidelity to archæological detail are united to higher qualities than even the painting of these in utmost perfection. What strikes us first in this picture is the sense of size, of grandeur, it conveys. It belongs to a

whole series of works which may be styled historical, though probably in the strict sense of the word they are not so, for they portray no special historical scene. They rather render the spirit of a given period. From an *atrium* on a high level down a broad flight of steps majestically descends Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the greatest and mightiest burgher of his day. He is clad in imperial red, that stands out marvellously against the white of the marble stairs. His face is set with a look of stern determination that speaks of unbending will. He is followed by a crowd of persons, some of whom are still bowing, though Agrippa has passed by. Upon the landing at the bottom of the stairs—a marvel of blue mosaics with a tiger-skin lying across it—there is a table. On this stands a silver Mars and materials for writing, for the use of the two scribes standing behind it. Note the character in these heads, the close-cropped hair that denotes their servile rank, the cringing salute, each trying to outbid the other in humility of manner. Just before these figures, at the foot of the staircase, stands the world-famed statue in the Vatican, of 'Augustus Imperator,' the only man whose supremacy proud Agrippa would acknow-

ledge, his device being, "To obey in masterly fashion, but obedience to one person only." Below this statue, where the staircase seems to turn at the landing, is another group. These are evidently three suitors, of whom one, a woman, holds in her hand some gift. Even to the rich and mighty, gifts "*ne gâtent rien*" when you have a request to make. This group—father, son, and daughter—are admirably real. And not the least felicitous touch in this beautiful work is the glimpse of outer air seen beyond the *atrium*, beyond the group of followers. It is again one of those Tadema bits of sky that never fail to produce so wonderful an effect. The greater part of this picture was painted in the autumn of 1875, of which the artist

spent the winter in the Eternal City, after the wrecking of his lovely house, by the famous explosion on the Regent's Park Canal. I remember well those days in Rome and the painter's delight that he had painted the tiger skin so naturally. "Don't you see him wag his tail?" he asked me in his boyish glee. This naïve enjoyment of his own work is a delightful trait in Alma Tadema.

'Cleopatra' is a subject the artist has again turned to since its first treatment in 1875. In each case it is difficult to speak of the work. Helen of Troy and Cleopatra are the two great types of female beauty concerning which each individual will have his own ideal. The ideal of the youth



A Portion of the 'Vintage Festival.' (See page 14.) Engraved by J. D. Cooper.

who sees "*Helenen in jedem Weibe*" will not be that of the matured man. The Cleopatra of the one cannot be the Cleopatra of the other. For ourselves we must confess Alma Tadema's rendering is not the "serpent of old Nile" of our imagination. Age would wither her, and there is hardly any varying there for custom to stale. It would seem, however, that the painter, always careful, had here too some archæological basis to work upon for his face of the great Queen. It was modelled upon a bust of her mother, Berenice.

'After the Dance' shows us a figure almost life-size, a Bacchante lying asleep on a black skin, after some religious debauch. The work is strong and daring, but the form is not truly beautiful. More sympathetic is the 'Balneatrix' (see

illustration, page 16), who is waiting to attend on the ladies as they leave their bath. The figure is full of grace, and the face is singularly sweet. 'The Bath' (see illustration, page 21) shows us some Roman ladies bathing. 'Haystacks' is a little poem, and 'Who is it?' (see illustration), is animated and pleasing. In 'Hide-and-Seek' (see illustration, page 17) we are carried back once more to Rome. This is the Villa Albani (a glorified tea-garden, I have heard Tadema irreverently call it), with its curious tall marble terms. The sun streams down upon the long marble way that leads through the garden to the villa, where a little maid has hidden. But her companion has found her, and looks up at her with laughing face and triumph at having discovered the retreat.

A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

IN 1876 Tadema was elected an Associate of the English Royal Academy of Arts, an election that gave him great pleasure, as it testified to his full admission amid the ranks of those English artists among whom he had, since his arrival in England, wholly cast his lot. The news reached him while he was spending the winter in Rome, busily making studies of antique Art and architecture. The first picture exhibited after this election was the 'Agrippa.'

The four 'Seasons' belong to the next year, and show us in four different scenes the embodiment as conceived by him of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. 'Spring,' draped in white in the midst of flowers, is very fresh and sweet, and the flower-gathering figures are full of suggestion. This is *their* spring-time as well as

that of spring. In 'Summer,' in a large green bronze bath, is sitting one woman, while another, clad in a saffron-coloured garment, sits in an attitude of graceful abandonment on its edge. Rose-leaves strewn with a liberal hand float upon the surface of the water. We have wonderful mosaics in this work, and the roses in the woman's hair, the yellow fan in her hand, make a strikingly bright effect. It is all dazzlingly bright, for is it not summer? In 'Autumn' we have a Roman wine-store. There is a lighted tripod by the term of the god, to whom a woman in a deep reddish robe pours libation. 'Winter,' too, is Roman in subject. Three women are grouped round a brazier, and the light that we have here is no longer that of the clear spring-time, of summer in its glory, or autumn in its strength. There is snow in it, and as we gaze we feel half inclined to hold out our hands to the brazier, so cold has it grown. Alma Tadema's 'Seasons' are admirably expressive, and each tells its story perfectly.

The 'Sculptor's Model' is a life-size study of a nude model, one of the very few things done in that style by Tadema. This particular picture was painted as a lesson for his now successful pupil, John Collier. The sculptor is busy modelling the female's form. The girl stands with her left hand raised to her hair, in her right she holds a palm-branch; her head is slightly

bent, and she seems resting the weight of her body on one hip. Tadema was incited to the subject by the discovery in 1874 of the Esquiline Venus. The sculptor's model was an essay at a reconstruction of this noble statue. The background is full of subtle harmonies of colour, the flesh is well painted, but the whole picture fails to impress deeply; indeed, the work leaves us decidedly cold, and its nudeness is rather unpleasant, not beautiful, because a little lacking in ideality. 'Between Hope and Fear,' the form of an old man full of quiet strength, was also one of this year's pictures; nor must we omit the delicious 'Kitchen Garden,' to which we have already referred in passing.

In the year 1878 we have the thoroughly charming 'Love

Missile,' a young girl throwing her lover a letter hidden in a bunch of glorious roses. The attitude of the girl as she half leans upon a couch is full of grace, and there is a little touch of comedy in the whole work that adds to its delightful freshness. But the year is chiefly memorable for the 'Fredegonda.' In this production the painter returned to the old chronicles that had fascinated his youth. The reason for this "return to the barbarians" is not far to seek. Indeed, the painter has himself given us that reason in his "They are so picturesque." This element of picturesqueness has been brought out to the full by Tadema in 'Fredegonda.' A few years previously he had contributed some pictures to the Old Water-colour Society's Gallery, illustrating certain passages in the lives of Fredegonda and Galswintha. One of these dealt with Fredegonda watching the marriage of her husband with her rival. The work with which we are now dealing is a later, more finished, and more powerful version of the same scene. Fredegonda, seated at an open window, whose curtain she is half drawing aside, sees Galswintha standing with bowed head by the great oak, while Chilperic, he who had been her husband and was now abandoning her, "breaks the willow branch," the great Frankish marriage ceremony, over the head of his new bride. All about them stand priests, and bishops, and singers. There are acolytes, too, and the air is thick with the fumes from the



Herr Burnoy as Marc Antony. (See page 23.) Engraved by Carl Dietrich.

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PANDORA. Engraved by H. Linton.

censers that they swing. An attendant on the bride bears the Visigothic crown of gold, mounted on a long staff. Beyond is a church in red brick. Fredegonda is half reclining on her couch, and there is that in the half graceful, half ferocious pose that involuntarily suggests both the grace and the ferocity of the tiger. The face is very beautiful; especially lovely is the long fair hair with the jewels twined about it. We meet this hair many a time in Tadema's pictures. But it is not the beauty of the face we remember; it is its expression. For ourselves we confess we could hardly say now what were her features; but we remember clearly the look of the eyes, and, above all, of the mouth. It seemed to grow white as we looked at it. There is nothing coarse in the terrible passion of this face; all is quiet, self-contained. But it is the face of her who in the Merovingian mythic stories to some extent embodies the hatred against Rome, the fierce struggle of the old Barbarians against the new civilised power. The force of this picture lies in the fine rendering of passion, of a passion that typifies a whole epoch of history in one woman's beautiful form. There is a certain want of pathos in the expression, of the pathos we moderns half expect to find there. But it is the very absence of pathos in our nineteenth-century sense that is one of the chief merits of a very remarkable work. It may be well here to say a word about Tadema's water-colours—no less finished, no less luminous and beautiful than his oils. He works this medium with rare mastery, and so strong, so delicate withal, and so finished are his water-colour drawings, that for perfection of craftsmanship there is nothing to choose between the two methods, as produced by his brush, except the greater richness and depth that resides of itself in the older medium.

'Architecture in Ancient Rome' shows us an architect—he is no longer a young man, but is still full of strength and energy—who, standing on a scaffolding, is critically considering an ornamental sketch that lies at his feet. He has not yet decided whether the work will or will not do, and the look of anxiety on the face of the man to his right and at his feet, who awaits the master's sentence, is well rendered. Below, in the distance—and a wonderful effect of distance the painter has managed to convey—workmen are moving about busily in a scene full of animation.

The work is in every respect a counterpart of the 'The Sculptor' at work on the colossal head of Augustus.

In the 'Hearty Welcome' we again have a picture full of

light and shade and fresh joyousness. Into a garden full of flowers, of which we specially notice poppies that differ entirely from those in the 'Tarquin,' and sunflowers gorgeous in colour, the sun peeps through trellised vines with all the warmth of the lovely south. Bathed with the light of sun and flowers, stands a child who is welcoming home its mother. Behind them is the father, bearing a scroll in hand. He and the eldest daughter, who is stooping down to stroke a dog, have both returned with the mother. An old attendant is there too, and even the dog looks a welcome and shares in the general pleasure. The whole is simple enough but very sweet. This picture was painted for Sir Henry Thompson: the figures represent Tadema himself, his wife and daughters.

'Not at Home' takes us from a Roman garden into a Roman house. Near a doorway a young girl has hidden herself. Another, her arms outspread before the *velum*, is perjuring herself by assuring a gentleman that the other maid is "not at home." She is so evidently "fibbing," that the gentleman is trying to peep in and find out the fact for himself. The usual marbles, mosaics, and draperies are to the fore; but rarely has Tadema given us anything more beautiful than the bronze seat in this picture.

'Down to the River' (see illustration, p. 18) is yet another Roman scene. A lady and her child with their attendants are going down some steps to the river's bank, where a nigger boatman is waiting to row them down the Tiber. Another lady has already gone lower down the steps than this one, and is apparently coming to terms with the boatman. We have a long view of the bridge, and beneath it the green-blue water looks pleasantly fresh.

'In the Time of Constantine' is not without that touch of humour which we have before had occasion to notice in some of Tadema's works. Two men clad in Roman costume sitting in a shady garden are energetically engaged in teaching a small dog to beg. Here very ably and

with subtlety the artist has impressed on us the fact that in the time of Constantine the Romans were weak, had sunk from their early high estate, so that the Barbarians were to



The Bath. (See page 19) Engraved by J. P. Davis.

find them an easy prey and could take the power out of their hands. It is worth mention that one of the men is supposed to have been a Scotchman, and the dog with which these "grave seignors" toy is a Scotch terrier.

'Pomona's Festival' gives us dancers round a tree, and there is in this picture all the unreasoned, delightfully spontaneous animal enjoyment that only the south fully understands how to enjoy and to express. The 'Harvest Festival' is a gem of colouring, all aglow with rich tints. 'After the Audience' had not been exhibited in London till it was in the Grosvenor Collection in 1882. It is a pendant to the 'Agrippa,' and with quiet humour depicts the whole party returning to the house, their backs turned to the spectators. Tadema had been asked to make a replica of the 'Agrippa,' and this is how he made it.

Another charming work is the 'Departure.' Here we are taken into a Pompeian house; outside the door, which is held open by a slave, stands a carriage waiting. A mother is stooping down to kiss her little girl good-bye. She is going away, evidently to some neighbouring place, for the good-bye is no sad one. Indeed, we see in the distance the goal of her journey, the amphitheatre. On a pedestal stands a bust of the father; beyond the carriage we again have one of those introductions of light and outer air which we have already referred to on several occasions. The owner of this picture, the German novelist, George Ebers, says, in speaking of it, "What gives this gem of a picture especial value is, that the beautiful young woman with the violets in her hair is the wife of the painter himself; that the little daughter is the charming Miss Anna Tadema, and that the bust on the pedestal represents the master. All three are admirably hit off, and are easily recognisable." The theme itself was suggested in the first instance by the fifteenth idyl of Theocritus.

To these years belongs one of the smallest, but one of the very loveliest pictures that Alma Tadema has painted, one of those pictures that dwell in the memory like the strain of some sweet song. The little work—the adjective refers only to its size—was called 'A Question.' Beside a sea of perfect blue, beneath a blue and cloudless sky, a youth and maiden are together. She sits on a white marble seat near this blue sea, her lap full of roses. He leans upon the marble and asks her the question. It is not difficult to guess what this question is; what but the old, old story, ever new, ever fresh and ever sweet! The air is hot with that cloudless sunny heat we northerners can but dream about. It is a picture perfect in every detail, and, as a whole, full of youth and beauty and delight. To look at it is to grow young again, and gazing at these two, the youth and the maid, we cannot but murmur Shelley's words—

"With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be,
Shadow of annoyance,
Never came near thee,
Thou lovest but ne'er knew'st love's sad satiety."

The charm of this picture so took hold of Ebers, that he wrote, inspired by it, his prose idyl of the same name. It is not to be wondered at perhaps that Alma Tadema has made many variants of this scene, both in oil and water colour.

To the same period belongs also the charming 'Well-protected Slumber' (see illustration, page 23), which was painted in 1879, and although like many another canvas Tadema has painted, it yet possesses a strong individuality, and invites by its simplicity, its softness and delicacy.

The year 1881 is memorable chiefly as the 'Sappho' year; but ere touching on what, with a few other works, shared the chief honour of the Academy of that year, we must glance at some other pictures of the same period.

'Quiet Pets' (see Frontispiece) shows us a lady feeding tortoises. Quiet is the very word to use for the picture; it is quiet and harmonious, and Alma Tadema has made a most dexterous use of furs and marble. 'The Tepidarium,' too, was a very charming work, with many of the qualities, but also a few of the defects, of the painter. 'An Audience' consists of three women in Roman costume, seen in profile. 'Pandora' (see page illustration) is lost in contemplation of some treasure from the deep. 'A Torch Dance' represents a Bacchante treading her measure before a temple. The bronze doors are slightly opened, and reveal the flute-players within. There is a certain wildness in the movement of the dancer that is very happily rendered. In 'Sappho' (see page etching), as with the 'Cleopatra,' this poetess does not appear to most as their ideal Muse. She sits by a kind of desk, on which lies the wreath bound with ribbons that is the crown of poets, and is clad in one of those combinations of pale green and grey that Tadema loves; violets, as is fitting and in accordance with tradition, crown her black hair—black as a raven's wing; and the violets, the grey and the green of the dress, harmonise exquisitely with the dark complexion of the face. By her side stands her daughter. There is something sweet and virginal in the earnest face, and the form is graceful. But the daughter is not beautiful like the mother. Behind Sappho rise three tiers of a marble exedra, and on these, in various attitudes, sit three pupils of her school. But beautiful as are many of these forms, and interesting as they all are, they are not the real soul of the picture. This is Alcæus, who, opposite Sappho, clothed in a pale rose-coloured garment, sits half reclining touching the strings of a lute. The story runs that Alcæus wished to gain Sappho's support for a political scheme of which he was head and front; and the story runs also that he loved her, and in the passionate expression of his eyes and mouth we here read rather the lover than the politician. But that which makes this picture live in the memory is more especially its indescribable colouring. Often has Tadema given us delicious little bits of blue sky, but never such a sky as this, that has a depth, a clearness such as no other living painter could possibly have given. The dark blue skies of other artists have a way of looking very much like what they are, pieces of canvas daubed with dark blue. To give atmosphere to their skies, most painters must give us clouds. Tadema alone can give us such a southern heaven as this, one mass of deep rich blue, looking all the deeper, all the bluer, from its contrast with the dark leaves of the stone pines that separate the amphitheatre from the shore. Through these we see the sea, that seems positively to ebb and flow. The marble of the seats is pure white—dazzlingly white in this clear light and sunshine. We heard a curiously clever remark on the effect of this picture from a tiny little child. She said, "When I look at that," pointing to the 'Sappho,' "I should like to wear clothes like that, *I feel so hot in these.*" 'En Repos,' 'Reflection,' 'Cleopatra,' the second 'Cleopatra' of the painter, and 'Young Affections,' this last a delicious garden scene of a white term of Silenus standing amid masses of flowers and leaves, with a lady and child in the foreground, are all works belonging to 1882.

In this year's work we must not omit to mention the portrait of Herr Barnay as Marc Antony. The moment chosen (see illustration, page 20) is that of the speech over Cæsar. This is the Antony of Shakespeare, perhaps, rather than of history, but we like him not the less well for this. Those who saw the fine performance of the German actor will admit that Tadema has here very thoroughly caught the expression of the face, the manner of the man. In this work, too, the flesh is splendidly modelled, a matter in which Tadema is not always quite successful. Perhaps we notice the background in this portrait a little more than we should, but as it is a good background in itself, we cannot complain of what is possibly a slight artistic mistake.

In 1883 Tadema's chief work was the lovely 'Oleander,' his diploma picture, 'The Way to the Temple,' 'Shy' (see illustration, page 25), and some portraits. The 'Oleander' represents a magnificent specimen of this tree so loved of the Romans. Its glorious pink blossoms stand out against a red wall, and the great branches spread across a corridor. Through them we see the sunlight playing on the water with one of those effects of which neither Tadema nor his admirers seem to tire. Near the oleander sits a woman clad in dark green and blue, and in this case the charge of giving less soul to his human beings than to his stones, not even to speak of flowers, is not unfounded. In fact, we hardly notice, certainly do not remember this woman, while the pink blossoms, the yellow columns of the corridor, the sunlit water, all stand out clear and distinct. Of this Alma Tadema seems himself to have been conscious to a certain degree, for he has called his picture 'An Oleander,' thus tacitly admitting that the woman has more or less been thrown in as an accessory to the flowers. 'On the Way to the Temple' (see illustration, page 27), though far better than the usual run of diploma works, can hardly be considered one of the finest specimens of this painter's art. Once again we have a temple, we see its shady interior contrasted with the sunshine on its columns. Beneath its portico pass the votaries of Bacchus; they sing as they move along to do homage to the god. In the foreground, in the shade, sits a priestess. She holds in her hand a statuette; by her side stands a tripod; upon her yellow reddish hair rests a wreath, and her robe is red and pink. There is a strange, wistful look in her eyes. We half wonder why she is sitting there, and if she is not waiting for some one. But perhaps the strange eyes are only straining to see the god himself. She is there really, as we know, to sell offerings to the devout. That this work has many admirable qualities no one is likely to dispute, but its *technique* is certainly not so perfect as Tadema has taught us to expect from him. He has no one but himself to blame if we make great demands upon him, and if, falling a little below his ordinary level, we are disappointed and indulge in a small grumble. 'Shy' is a pleasant, happy subject, which tells its own story simply and directly.

In 1884 Tadema first came before the public markedly with claims to be also a portrait painter. Whether this be truly his line the general public allows itself to doubt, fine as are the specimens he has placed before them. It appears too much as if he could model the outside man, but did not penetrate to the soul, as if he did not read into the depths of the character that was before him. With men he has shown himself more successful than with women, as notice his Dr. Epps (see illustration, page 26), and especially with the two specimens of his skill that the Grosvenor Gallery of that year exhibited. One of these was the picture of Amendola,



• Well-protected Slumber." (See page 22.) Engraved by Carl Dietrich.

the Italian sculptor, who is painted in his studio dress, a silver statuette in his hand. The modelling of the work is as excellent as the wonderfully clear tone and fine flesh painting. On all details, which Tadema knows so well to turn into integral portions of his pictures, he has lavished even more than his ordinary care. The statuette is a masterpiece of design and colouring. This perhaps we may account for by the fact that it represents Mrs. Tadema. The second portrait was that of Mr. Lowenstam, the etcher, sitting at an engraving table with a copperplate before him. The effect of light in this picture is excellent. It falls upon the figure through one of those half-transparent screens used by the professors of the

needle's art. There is perhaps even greater breadth of handling in this portrait than in the one of the Italian sculptor.

The Academy picture of 1884 was the celebrated 'Hadrian in England,' and is remarkable for several reasons; because it is the first time that Tadema has dealt with Roman Britain, a period well-nigh absolutely neglected; and also because it is one of his largest works. At the top of the picture stands the Emperor, who with his followers is visiting a British pottery, probably a famous one of the period. The master-potter is showing his work, and the Emperor looks on with a kind of resigned determination that is excellently hit off. He is going to "do" this thing, and though perhaps in his heart he does not feel much interested or capable of "living up" to these pots, he will go through with his task to the bitter end. His toga is of beautiful purple, his tunic crimson, the other garments quieter in tone. Behind him stands his friend, Lucius Verus, one of the best figures in the work. There is that in the full coarse lips and eyes, in the indolent pose as he leans lazily upon a staff, which tells a whole history. He is a type not merely of a luxurious Roman, but of a luxurious man. To the Emperor's right stand Balbilla, a blue-stocking of her time, and the Empress, the latter talking with the potter's wife, whose blue gown contrasts admirably with the rich reds. These are all grouped on a gallery, from which a flight of steps descends to the bottom of the picture. On it, his back towards us, is a slave, who, tray in hands, bears vases for inspection by the Emperor. He is followed by another slave, and the two fill the lower part of the picture. Beneath the arch of the gallery is a room where the potters are at work, small in scale; but that to many persons is the most interesting portion of the whole picture. There is a charm about this workshop which is wanting in the other groups and figures. The corridor is adorned with a picture of Mercury, and on the shelves in an alcove are seen specimens of black and grey pottery of exquisite form and colour. But one of the most effective bits, one of those interesting little reproductions of antique life in which Alma Tadema is so eminently happy, represents the altar of the household god. A snake is painted round it, and by a little lamp there is placed a votive offering of onions, sacred to the Penates. The potters have painted this inscription as a welcome to their Emperor:—

Ave, Imperator Cæsar,
Divi Trajani Parthi, filius,
Divi Nervæ nepos,
Trajanus Hadrianus,
Locupletator Orbis.

Hadrian was not, indeed, declared *locupletator* by the senate till after the date of this picture, but Alma Tadema thinks that it would probably be in some grateful colony that the title would first be, unofficially, suggested. The deep reds of the stairs show up the figures of the slaves and the rich dresses of Hadrian and his suite, and contrast well with the black pottery. The work was acknowledged to be a masterpiece of skill, but it lacks interest. We do not particularly care for any one person in the picture, and its interest decreases rather than increases as we mount the stairs to the Emperor, of whose group the best characterized figure is that of Verus. But in finish, in richness and harmony of colouring, Tadema himself has rarely produced anything finer than this fine work. We are, however, conscious of a certain sense of disproportion in the attention we lavish upon, e.g. the onions and the Emperor. It is of interest to note that this picture was painted at the suggestion of Mr. Minton, while the Roman British pottery

has been carefully studied from all specimens extant in England.

The next works which claim our attention are the altogether charming classic-genre pictures that Tadema has made his speciality, 'Expectations' and 'Who is it?' (see page illustration). We experience a physical delight in looking at these works. The sensation can only be compared to that of looking at something quite beautiful and whose beauty makes us glad. In 'Expectations,' a girl clothed in white is sitting on a marble seat that stands on the summit of a cliff. She is very lovely, and those who may have noted that Alma Tadema's hands and arms are not always quite satisfactory—a scientist once declared some of his women's arms were positively simian in their length—will see with pleasure the perfection of this maiden's hands. Her figure is one of rare grace as she reposes here, the warm sunshine about her, watching eagerly the skiff that is skimming over the water, and which we may venture to think holds her lover. The marble is wonderful, even for this painter, and the glorious Judas-tree flower on the branch above the marble contrasting with the white of the robe, the soft delicacy of the skin, the bright, sunlit sea, all this produces an effect of well-nigh indescribable sweetness. The flowers might almost be human beings, and the maiden is "flower-like;" "so tender, pure, and fair;" and, as Heine says, in gazing upon her a feeling of sadness, not without its delights, "steals on us unaware." Perhaps the small clouds gathering overhead despite all the sunshine account for this sadness, this pleasure-pain.

'Who is it?' is another of those scenes that Tadema invests with such peculiar life and meaning. Three girls in Roman gowns are grouped in the marble alcove of a window. They are tall, "divinely fair," and apparently very daughters of Eve, for one of them peers over the window-sill (she has climbed upon the bench to get a better view) to find out 'Who is it?' So life-like is the action we half expect to see her draw back suddenly after being found out peeping in this somewhat undignified position. The three maids are all charming, but there is a certain piquant grace about the prying damsel that marks her off from her companions. If she were a child we should say she was a little pickle.

In 'A Reading from Homer' (see page illustration), we have a scene reminding us of others of Tadema's works. To the right is the reader, holding in his hands a papyrus. He is explaining the argument, in which we may be sure there is "no offence." His face is alight with enthusiasm; he leans forward in his eagerness in a pose full of grace. He is partly robed in a rose-coloured garment, and sits on a bench, the blue sky above, the blue sea beyond him. His head is crowned with bay. He is going to read to four persons; one, a woman, daffodils in her fair hair and with a sort of tambourine in one hand, lies on the bench. With her left hand she clasps that of a youth reclining upon the ground below her. He is clad in blue; in his hand he holds a lyre. His face is strangely beautiful, as with his light brown eyes he looks at the man who speaks to them. He is full of fire and enthusiasm, a head to remember, almost to be haunted by; nor is it merely beautiful, there is far more than mere beauty in it. In the centre, lying on the marble floor, chin in hand, is yet another man clothed in goat skins; he is looking up with deepest interest. To the left stands a man crowned with flowers wearing a cloak. There is a certain wildness, almost haggardness in this face. On the bench there is also a mass of flowers that give not merely colour, but character to the whole. The flesh painting



WHO IS IT? Engraved by F. Babbage.

in this picture is of the very best Alma Tadema has done, and he has certainly never modelled anything more perfect than the figures of woman and lover. As to the luminosity of the work in its harmonious colouring, it may rank with his very highest efforts. Yet here, despite the charm of the lover's head and the beauty of his mistress, we again find in the reader the centre of the picture. This is as it should be; the reader is the chief person, the others only his audience. That such a work as this, comprising five large figures, with accessories such as Tadema paints, should have been painted in the space of two months seems almost incredible. Yet this was the case, a rare instance of rapid and finished work. Still, though this actual canvas was completed in so short a space, the preliminary studies, including an abandoned picture that was to have been called 'Plato,' occupied eight months of work.

Another picture of the year 1885 was the portrait 'My younger Daughter,' a remarkable work. The figure and its surroundings are a splendid example of Tadema's management, not only of colour as such, but of light and shade. If it has a fault it is that all the accessories are a little too much elaborated. They distract us from the figure itself, which is the more to be regretted that this is full of power. It is an admirable portrait of the young girl, who seems likely to make a name for herself in her father's profession. The last two years have seen careful works from her brush, in water colour, on the walls of the Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery.

Alma Tadema's contribution to the Royal Academy of the current year is too fresh in the memory of most persons to require much description. 'An Apodyterium,' representing the ante-chamber or undressing room of women's baths in the old Roman Empire, is a masterpiece of the style with which his name is permanently associated. The marble apartment, itself a delicious study of colour, is a marvel of highly finished painting. It is peopled with a few graceful

figures. In the foreground a lady, whose toilette is just completed, is about to pass out into the vestibule. The graceful nude figure seated on the stone bench against the wall, stooping to untie her sandal (see illustration, page 28), affords a skilful contrast; and in the background some admirably



'Shy.' (See page 23.)

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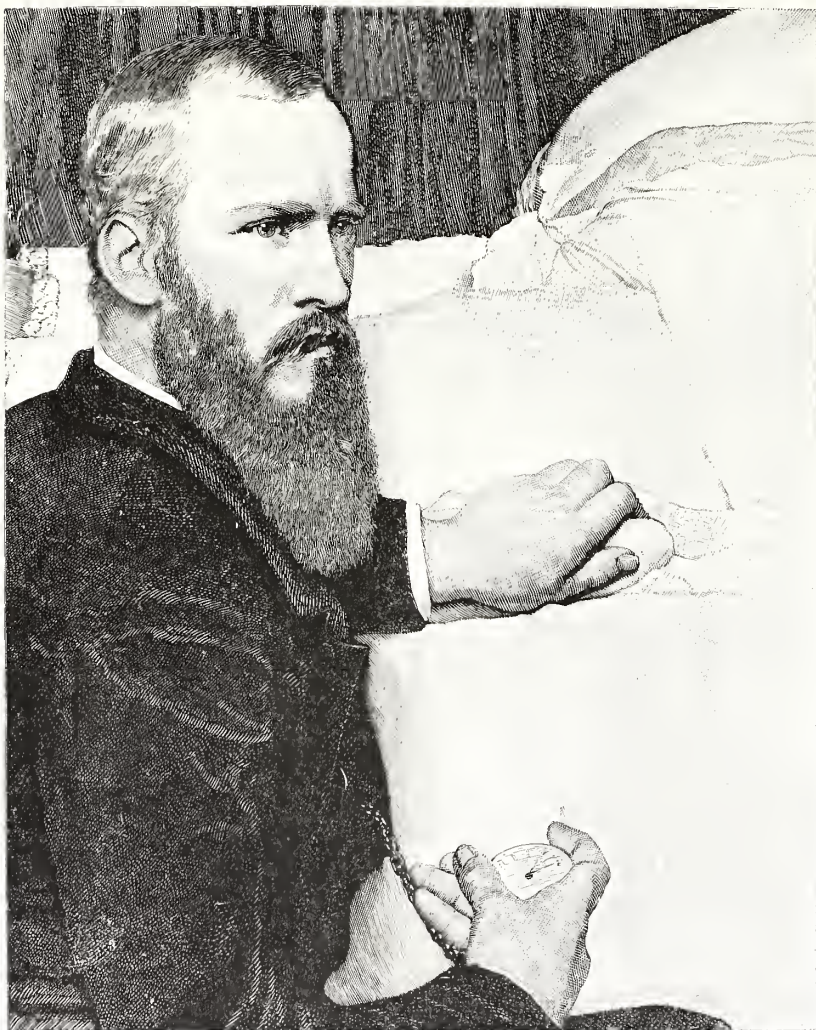
grouped figures are passing through the inner doors communicating with the actual bathing chambers. In this small canvas we have a representative picture of the painter's genre, whose perfection he himself would find it hard to surpass.

At the present moment the artist is engaged upon what for him is a large picture that deals with an important subject fully worthy of his brush. It will be exhibited at the next Royal Academy Exhibition, and is to be entitled the 'Women of Amphissa.' The subject, culled from Plutarch, will certainly be unfamiliar to the greater mass of the public, and a few words of preliminary explanation may be welcome. Amphissa was a city near to Mount Parnassus. The story runs that some time B.C. 350, "when the despots of Phocis seized upon Delphi, and the Thebans made that war called

nor indeed approached them while they slept, but as soon as they had risen, tended them and brought them food, and afterwards, having got leave of their husbands, went forth with them, leading them in safety even to the boundaries of their own land." There are more than forty female figures introduced into this work, some semi-nude in true Bacchic attire, the others, their kind protectors, clothed in the flowing garments made familiar to us in Tadema's work. It is too early to speak critically of a picture that even, however, in this early stage, is full of magnificent promise.

With this picture we have brought Alma Tadema's work down to the present time, and we have purposely, in glancing thus rapidly over a certain number of his most celebrated works, preserved the chronological order, both as being more interesting to the reader to watch the progress and development of the artist, and also as being more convenient for purposes of reference. Happily he is still in the full vigour of his strength and manhood, and may live to double the number of his works, of which the latest is *Opus 275*; for this artist follows the laudable practice of musicians and numbers each work, so that there can never arise with regard to his paintings any doubt as to their chronological order. But, as we have seen, he is an artist who has his groove, a wide and ample one, but yet his own distinct manner and method. He is not likely, therefore, to present us with works of an entirely different style and character from those we have previously received. Opinions upon him must naturally differ according to the tastes of the individual beholders. That he is a great artist not even his detractors can deny. Some, indeed, may find that he fails in the quality of spirituality. Even as a colourist, unrivalled though he is in many respects, others will say that he has not the poetic feeling of, for example, a Turner. But even granting that there may be some little justice in these reproaches of shortcomings, granting even a want of beauty in some of his men and women, no one will question Alma Tadema's remarkable genius, and above all its originality. He is

himself, no small virtue in these days of platitudes and philistinism. His love of nature too is sincere and honest, no mere affectation. A sapphire sea with its white-crested waves, a blue sky, sweet-smelling flowers, these are dear to Tadema for something more than the simple effect that can be got out of them, and the fact that he loves them for more than effect, makes his effects so fine. In brief, we have in Alma Tadema a man who is genuine all round; genuine, honest, true, and beauty-enamoured.



Dr. Epps. (See page 23.) Engraved by Karl Dietrich.

the Holy upon them, it chanced that the women sacred to Dionysus (who were named Thyades), going mad with passion and wandering by night, came unawares to Amphissa, where, being weary and not yet returned in their right wits, they threw themselves down in the market-place, and scattered here and there, lay sleeping. Whereupon the wives of the Amphissians, fearing (since the city of Phocis was allied to them, and many of the tyrant soldiers were about) lest the Thyades should not preserve their purity, ran all together to the market-place, and silently stood in a circle round them;

THE ARTIST INTERVIEWED.

ARTISTS, as a rule, have rarely the power of literary expression, can rarely formulate their ideas concerning their craft. They can generally only consciously or unconsciously express these in form, and this mode of expression is more often than not unconscious and unreasoned, an instinctive rather than a theoretical embodiment. Alma Tadema can scarcely be called an entire exception to this rule. His mind is not analytic. Still, he has, of course, his views on Art, and most interesting they are, as the views of a worker in any profession must always be, and above all, the views of a master workman. To listen to him, as he pours out his thoughts on his beloved career while working away at some minute detail in his picture, in the intervals that exist between the consumption of one cigarette and the lighting of another, is to have a real and rare treat. I put down for the benefit of that large public who will care to know what Alma Tadema thinks of Art, a few utterances of his, taken down verbally from his lips, and retaining in almost every case the racy, not al-

ways idiomatic, English in which the great painter expresses himself. For we must bear in mind that the English tongue

is only an acquired speech to him, acquired, too, in mature life. In his first utterance he gives the keynote to his ideas :—

“Art is imagination, and those who love Art love it because in looking at a picture it awakens their imagination and sets them thinking; and that is also why Art heightens the mind.”

Going on to speak of the need for accurate vision in an artist, he said :—

“To see, you must have a certain knowledge. Thus for an ordinary man all sheep are alike; but a shepherd knows each sheep separately, just as we know our friends. When Rosa Bonheur, some years ago, bought out of a herd of sheep one that pleased her, she was surprised by the shepherd's bringing her next day a different animal to the one she had chosen, and going back with him, was able to pick out the one she wanted, to the astonishment of the man, who had not believed that a woman could know so much about sheep. Unfortunately, a lot of youngsters in



On the Way to the Temple. (See page 23.)

our day speak of what they see, and they can't see because they don't know enough."

I begged him to speak of Art in general, with special reference to modern Art. Here follows what he replied:—

"One of the greatest difficulties in Art is to find a subject that is really pictorial, plastic. Many painters have sinned on that score. Of course the subject is an interesting point in a picture, but the subject is merely the pretext under which the picture is made, therefore it is wrong to judge the picture according to the subject. I have known very bad pictures painted from good subjects, and also very good pictures painted from bad subjects. In our day, however, Art is, as a rule, judged by literary people, who are often incapable of

Raphael's Sistine Madonna? It is in the ecstasy, of the Madonna, the beautiful serenity of the Venus, that lies the charm. Art must be beautiful, because Art must elevate, not teach; when Art teaches, in the common sense of the word, it becomes accessory to some other object.

"In elevating it only teaches because it ennobles the mind. Now you have that great question of modernity in Art, which has been so much talked of, since Courbet began to paint any low subject he came across, and Alfred Stevens, his advertisements for the Parisian dressmaker. I do not mean to say that their pictures are the worse for it, are not beautiful as pictures, but these two pre-eminent apostles of the hollow notion that you must paint your own time, have, in reality, never tried to give us any feeling of our own time. Modern Art means a modern expression of Art; the most modern of painters are those who succeed in producing good Art which is not like what has been done before, which is in keeping with the feeling of the day. If they paint a landscape, or a portrait, or a home scene, or an historical or religious picture, they must try to give in their work that which moves our time. We are no longer, for instance, the people of the religion of death, as in the days of Holbein, and a *Danse Macabre* would not speak to our minds and move the world as his did in his time. We now look out for cheerful things, and prefer a beam of sunshine to a storm. We believe, in fact, that with kindness we can be more successful than with oppression. A smile is more pleasant to us than a tear, and we no longer find the fanatic love for skulls that existed in centuries gone by. In history we are no longer satisfied with the king or the great general alone, but we want to know who the people were over whom the king reigned; who the soldiers were that made the general victorious. We like to know that Hadrian contributed to the happiness of his subjects by looking into their wants and helping them where he could; and we love to think that a Marcus Aurelius, by doing so much to improve the moral standing of his time, merited more gratitude from mankind, perhaps, than a Julius Cæsar or an Alexander the Great. Modern Art hunts after truthfulness, perhaps, more than in times gone by; hence the hollow name of realistic. Some people

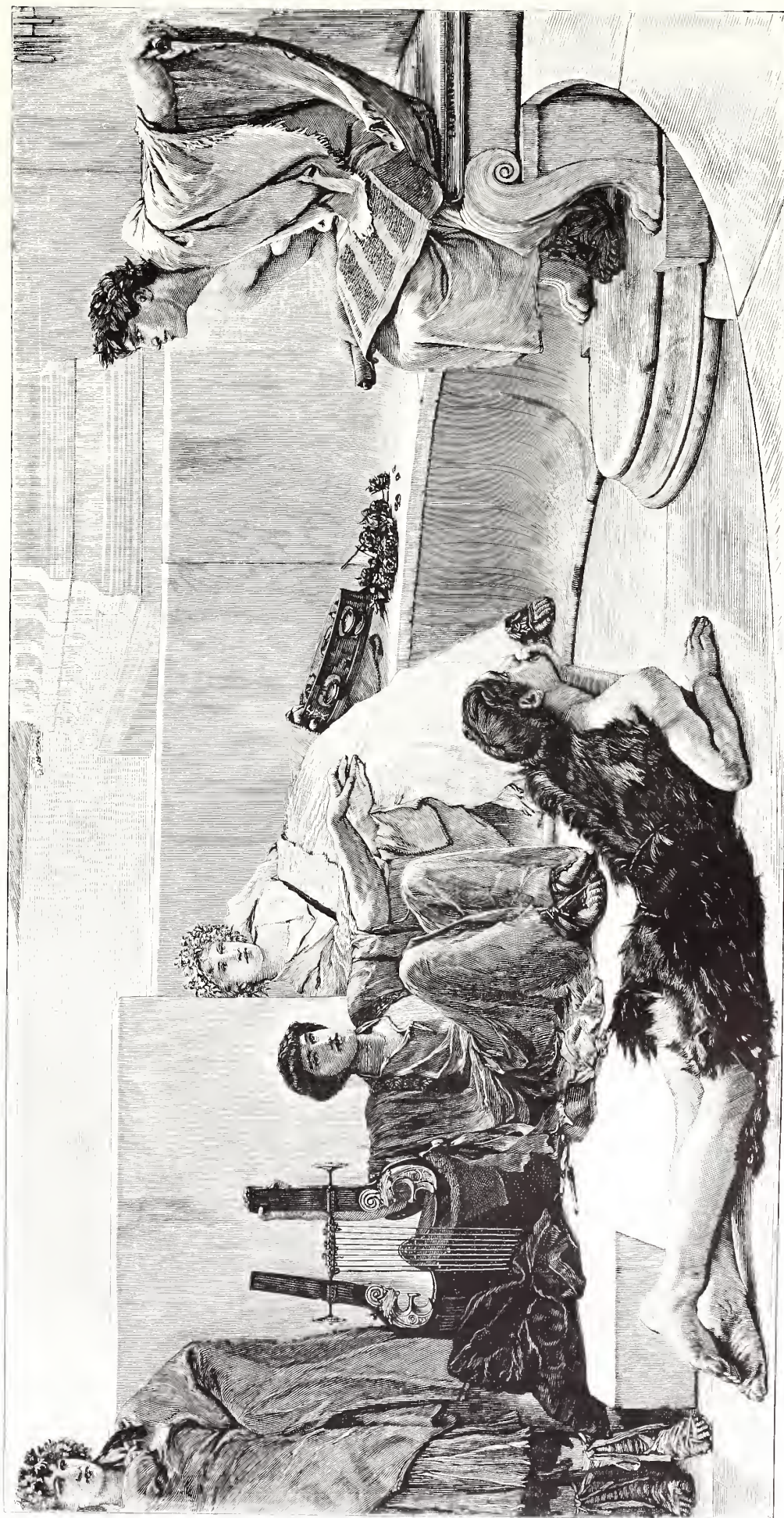


Study for 'An Apodyterium.' (See page 25.)

seeing in a picture anything besides the subject, and judge accordingly. I remember that a great professor of history at the University of Ghent, repeatedly recommended me to paint that striking incident in history where William the Silent, when leaving the Netherlands to organize that great struggle with Spain, in answer to the parting words of Counts Egmont and Horn: 'Good-bye, noble Prince without a country,' said—'Good-bye, noblemen without heads.'

"Of course the feeling of such a scene cannot be given in a picture. What subject is there in the Venus of Milo that can be written down? Yet, nobody will deny that it is one of the greatest works of Art. What subject is there in

think that realism in Art means, to paint what they see; it, in reality, means to render the subject more naturally, in a way more true to nature. Nature has so many aspects, is so individual in every form it produces, in every sentiment it awakes, that no two people can see, feel, and think the same way, and, consequently, 'true to nature' does not mean 'true to what is before you,' because Art cannot be measured. Art is the rendering of an impression received, which must be individual and of which the rendering must be personal. For instance, given a woman beautiful in all senses, one will be charmed by her complexion and will paint a picture of her; another will be charmed with her form



A READING FROM HOMER. Engraved by Carl Dietrich.

and will model a statue of her. Which of the two is truest to nature? As for the individuals who receive the impressions of nature, their differences are manifold. There are men who are colour-blind, others are moved to ecstasies by colour; surely between these two expressions of nature there are many degrees. Further, there are people who are form-blind, and others who will go into ecstasies over a beautiful shape. Thus there have been artists, great draughtsmen, who could not paint, having no feeling for colour, and if an artist has received an overpowering gift for form, he becomes a sculptor.

"It always astonishes me that our modern public, with its love of the natural, should still be devoted to the old principle of portraiture. A head and some clothes, sometimes one or two hands, and the rest some black or brown. In fact, a portrait depicting a person under conditions they are never seen in. I, for one, never see my friends, never see anybody, without seeing at the same time more or less of the place in which I meet them; of course, to paint the surroundings and study them and work the whole into a picture, involves a great deal more trouble than to rub the canvas full of a certain nondescript colour. But if I were to order the portrait of somebody dear to me, I should certainly like to have that person painted surrounded by accessories which awakened in my memory, say a pleasant meeting, or pleasant hours."

Concerning the education of young artists, I once heard him say:—"It is my belief that an Art student ought not to travel; when once he has become an artist, conscious of his own aim, of his own value, and of his own wants, he will certainly profit by seeing the works of great masters, because he will then be able to understand them, and, if necessary, to appropriate such things as may appear useful to him.

"With one or two exceptions, none of the artists who, at various times, gained the *Prix de Rome* at Paris or Brussels, and were consequently given travelling scholarships, have stood among the foremost men of their day. On the other hand, Meissonier, Jérôme, Leys, remained at home until they were consummate artists; Rembrandt never left Amsterdam; and Rubens, when travelling through Italy, made some sketches after Leonardo and others which might well be taken for original Rubenses, because Rubens was already Rubens when he did them. Vandyke, Velasquez, travelled when they were really Vandyke and Velasquez, but not before."

Of his own pictures, his own mode of giving expression to his theories, Alma Tadema rarely speaks. To be living and modern, for all his archaisms, may be defined as the key-note of his art. It is that which distinguishes it from the works of archæological painters, who exist by the score, but who have merely striven to depict classical antiquity by slavishly copying its remains. He has the poetic instinct, as well as the originality and boldness, to comprehend with the heart as well as with the head, and it is this that gives him his unique character.

He has often been reproached with want of imagination, and the reproach vexes him. It is founded on a confusion between imagination in plastic combinations and poetry. Tadema has much imagination, great constructive powers, but he lacks a little that form of sentiment which invests the most commonplace action with a human tenderness that arouses our feelings of fellowship with the persons represented. At the opposite pole of this stands, for example, an artist like Frederick Walker. With the few exceptions I have noted, he avoids in his pictures themes that deal with passion or tenderness. He does not love the deeper tra-

gedies and problems of our vexed mortal life, he is a Hedonist and depicts life from that stand-point. This necessarily entails upon him certain limitations both of vision, action, and comprehension. It is perhaps his Dutch origin that deprives him of certain subtleties of feeling. His pictures rarely rouse our deepest, highest emotions. But it is wrong to cavil at receiving no more from a man who gives us so much and gives it in such perfection.

Alma Tadema, fortunately for himself and the world, is not led astray by success; he grows, if possible, yet more self-exacting, self-critical, he never loses sight of the fact that "noblesse oblige." That as a colourist he is almost unrivalled is well known. With keen scientific knowledge regarding his art, he combines exquisite natural taste, and a faultless manipulation. It is a pleasure to watch him handle his brush and place his strokes, none of which are idly bestowed or fail to tell their tale. In this matter of bestowing the most careful finished workmanship, he has remained a Dutchman. Indeed his precision, his patience in minutiae, are thoroughly Dutch. With a nature as sunny and genial as his art, there is but one thing he hates, and that is perfunctory work, and of course he hates it the most cordially in his own art where he best knows its evidences. "I love my art," he says, "too much to like to see people scamp it; it makes me furious to see half work, and to see the public taken in by it and unable to understand the difference."

It is pleasant to be able to add that the man is as estimable as the painter. Honoured by all, he is loved by those who have the privilege to know him well. Warm-hearted and generous, younger artists never appeal to him in vain for help or advice; his hand is always open, his time, his strength always at the service of the genuine worker, no matter in what department. Egotism is entirely foreign to his nature. His conversation, when he is in the vein for talk, is suggestive and exhilarating in the extreme. He speaks with earnestness and ardour, a happy felicity of language, a graphic, altogether individual power of expression. His talk is like his work; it has a stamp all its own; even the most commonplace thing is said by Alma Tadema in a manner that is original. "All my pictures," he once said to me, "are the expression of one idea, they deal with different subjects, but one style of thought is expressed in them." It is the same with all else concerning him, this great artist is homogeneous throughout. In short Alma Tadema is one of those few remaining original figures which stand out so rarely now, like sturdy rocks in the smooth sea of a tame and conventional world. London society knows well that short, strongly built figure, with its face of kindly strength, its frank, friendly, observant eyes, its cheery voice. Brimful of energy, of ardent love for all that is good and beautiful, he diffuses strength by his mere presence, he lifts those who come in contact with him into higher mental spheres, above the base and sordid interests of every day. He is pre-eminently gifted with that gift which, according to Goethe, is the highest and happiest that can be bestowed on mankind, that of personality. It is this that has made Alma Tadema great; he has a personality, and he dares to be true to it in these modern days when alllevelling conventionality is the fashion of the hour. "The secret of my success in my art," I have heard him say, "is, that I have always been true to my own ideas, that I have worked according to my own head and have not imitated other artists. To succeed in anything in life one must first of all be true to one's self, and I may say that I have been this." These words are no idle boast in his mouth.

HIS HOME AND STUDIO.

"**L**E milieu explique l'homme, l'atelier commente l'œuvre," is a luminous saying, and to no artist was this perhaps more applicable than to Alma Tadema. His home and studio were works of Art from his own hands; in his home bits of his pictures seemed to stand plastically before us; in his surroundings we better understood the peculiar genius of the master. Tadema's house, at the corner of the Townshend Road, and facing one of the prettiest tree-shaded bits of the Regent's Park and its picturesque canal, was long one of the sights of London for those who were privileged to lift the antique mask of bronze that formed a knocker to the massive oaken house-door, over whose portals was inscribed the friendly greeting, *Salve*. It is a sad reflection to those who have spent many pleasant hours under that hospitable roof to think that its loveliness, upraised with so much care and

knew it, we repeat, it must be a matter of never-ending regret that such loveliness should not have been permitted to endure, and that what was a dream of wonder, a very fairy land in midst of the hum-drum of London life, has once more been converted into a commonplace prosaic London house. For that perhaps was the greatest marvel of it all, that this dwelling had not been built for the artist; that he found it an ordinary town residence, and that by his skill, ingenuity, and taste, he completely transformed and glorified it. The house which will now be his dwelling is also situated near the Regent's Park, amid the large old-fashioned gardens that still exist in portions of St. John's Wood. This house is being built almost from the foundations for Tadema. It was an artist's home before, the dwelling of the Frenchman Tissot; but of his bachelor residence few traces will remain.

As yet the outside and inside of the new house are in a state of transition, so that it is not possible to say much about either. The style in which it is built is of no particular period. It has been entirely designed by Alma Tadema himself, with the technical assistance of Mr. Alfred Calderon. It was begun in the August of last year, and will probably not be entirely finished for another twelve months. We present to our readers three drawings that have been made for this article of the exterior of the house. One is taken from the greenhouse in the garden, and shows the windows of Mrs. Tadema's future studio and library; another shows the front entrance and large studio window;



Principal Entrance: Studio Front. From a Drawing by J. Elmsly Inglis.

thought and art, is a thing of the past, now living alone in memory. Last year Tadema quitted this beautiful abode, which had grown too small for his domestic requirements, and it will not be until next year, probably, that the great artist can once more be said to dwell within a home of his creation. Seeing that Townshend House with its glories is a thing of the past, seeing, too, that it has been so often described and illustrated, it seems too late in the day to give once more a detailed account of its charms, its Gothic library, its gold drawing-room, its panelled Dutch room, its columned second drawing-room, with the onyx windows; its Pompeian studio, with frescoes from the master's hand; its cheerful dining-room opening on to the garden, which ever in summer presented a wealth of poppies and sunflowers. To those who

know it, we repeat, it must be a matter of never-ending regret that such loveliness should not have been permitted to endure, and that what was a dream of wonder, a very fairy land in midst of the hum-drum of London life, has once more been converted into a commonplace prosaic London house. For that perhaps was the greatest marvel of it all, that this dwelling had not been built for the artist; that he found it an ordinary town residence, and that by his skill, ingenuity, and taste, he completely transformed and glorified it. The house which will now be his dwelling is also situated near the Regent's Park, amid the large old-fashioned gardens that still exist in portions of St. John's Wood. This house is being built almost from the foundations for Tadema. It was an artist's home before, the dwelling of the Frenchman Tissot; but of his bachelor residence few traces will remain.

of a sitting-room than a waiting-room, is only separated from this glass house by a wall of glass sliding doors. The effect of this will be most charming. The room or hall itself is to be panelled with white panelling, inlaid with the narrow upright pictures contributed by various artist-friends, which formerly decorated Mrs. Alma Tadema's studio in Townshend House, comprising paintings by Cecil Van Haanen, Alfred Parsons, Clara Montalba, John O'Connor, Charles Green, E. F. Brewtnell, and several others. The floor of this apartment, as well as the adjoining passages, will be paved with tiles made expressly in Naples.

Mrs. Alma Tadema's new studio will be a large room with an oak-beamed ceiling, ornamented with antique corbels, an antique terra-cotta chimney-piece, and antique oak panelling and doors. Four Dutch workmen have been had over from Holland on purpose to fit this splendid ceiling, which was designed by Alma Tadema to utilise some antique carvings. Out of this will lead a smaller room, slightly up-

raised, in which will stand an old Dutch bedstead and other old Dutch furniture. The windows are filled in with old stained glass of quaint design and soft colouring. The library will be a light room, with a large bow window. The principal furniture and decoration will of course be the book-cases. The dining-room will be panelled with the antique panelling that formerly decorated the Dutch room in Townshend House. A small annex attached to this room will lead into the pretty garden, while at the opposite end it will give admission to the atrium, from which it will be separated by a fine door of mahogany on one side and cedar on the other.

It will be a remarkable feature throughout the house that the woodwork used for doors, skirtings, sashes, cupboards, and so forth, is in almost every case merely polished, and not painted. Another feature will be the large amount of fine iron work, done by Newman, that will decorate the house in various places. The atrium, which will lead into the master's studio, will be decorated in the Pompeian style,



From the Abbey Road. From a Drawing by J. Elmsly Inglis.

according as the exigencies of the room will dictate, and is to contain a marble fountain. A staircase will lead from this apartment into the gallery of the studio. The studio itself—on the floor of the house—will be a very large and lofty room, with a high vaulted ceiling. At one end will be the apse, whose exterior our illustration shows. This will be hung with the magnificent red velvet embroidery that decorated the column-room in Townshend House, and which originally embellished some Venetian palace. Opposite the apse will be the principal window, which runs right up into the roof and fills the whole end of the room. Two smaller openings will contain windows of Mexican onyx, which were once a glory of the dismantled earlier house. Below these, in a slightly raised portion of the room, will stand the famous grand piano of oak, inlaid with ivory, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell, designed by George E. Fox, and which the world in general was able to admire at the Musical Exhibition of 1885 at Kensington. The ultimate decorations

of the studio are not yet decided upon. High up on the house side of the studio, and approached, as we have said, from the atrium, runs a gallery which will lead to a charming little room overlooking the glass house from above. With the exception of Miss Anna Alma Tadema's studio, the other rooms of the house will merely be those demanded by domestic requirements. When finished, the house will doubtless be no less beautiful than its lovely predecessor, but at present, as we have shown, all is in a state of creation.

The only part of the new residence that is already finished is a small studio, built last year, where Alma Tadema has been working since he left his former home; it stands at the farther end of the garden, and forms, together with one other apartment, a complete building in itself. This studio is small, but although Alma Tadema is building another of greater magnitude attached to his house, he will probably make equal use of both workrooms.

A fireplace of white and coloured marble, surmounted by

an unusually sightly chimney, in the shape of a silvered column with gilt capital and base, is one of the features of the lesser studio; also a window of onyx and transparent marble, brought from Townshend House. The walls, and a low arch at one end of the room, are entirely white, but the loftier and greater portion of the ceiling is embellished by beams and panels of polished woods, principally of pitch-

pine, which is also the material used for the flooring, book-cases, and general woodwork.

The studio is on a higher level than its companion apartment; at the head of a short flight of steps a small landing with open balustrades overlooks the lower room, the floor of which is tiled and the decoration simple. One wall is fitted with doors ornamented by plates of metal, on which are



East View. From a Drawing by J. Elmsly Inglis.

etched, by Mr. Leopold Lowenstam, sketches of Alma Tadema's 'Four Seasons;' these doors slide into the wall, and leave a wide opening, which communicates directly with the garden, making the room perfect in summer. In the centre of this opening stands a stone column which was brought from Bramletye House, in Sussex, built in the seventeenth century by a brother of Oliver Cromwell.

The garden itself is particularly pretty, and, for a London garden, large. It was originally laid out by its former owner, Tissot, many of whose decorations have been utilised in the present disposition of the ground, more especially a cinquecento colonnade and trellis, which, covered with creepers, forms one of the most striking features of this altogether striking spot.

HELEN ZIMMERN.

